IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Digital Repository

Graduate Theses and Dissertations | Graduate College

2016

Letting gendered spaces go: striving toward gender and nature balance through bonding in Disney's Frozen and Maleficent

Sarah Chase Crosby
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/etd

Part of the Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons, Film and Media Studies Commons, Folklore Commons, and the Gender and Sexuality Commons

Recommended Citation
Crosby, Sarah Chase, "Letting gendered spaces go: striving toward gender and nature balance through bonding in Disney's Frozen and Maleficent" (2016). *Graduate Theses and Dissertations.* Paper 15162.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate College at Digital Repository @ Iowa State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Repository @ Iowa State University. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

Letting gendered spaces go:
Striving toward gender and nature balance through bonding in Disney's *Frozen* and *Maleficent*

by

Sarah Chase Crosby

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Literature)

Program of Study Committee:
Michèle A. Schaal, Major Professor
Abby Dubisar
Jeremy Withers
David Zimmerman

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2016

Copyright © Sarah Chase Crosby, 2016. All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS viii

ABSTRACT vi

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 1. PATRIACHAL VERSUS MATRIARCHAL SPACES 6
Disney Castles as Masculine, Public Spheres 9
Nature as Feminine, Private Sphere 30

CHAPTER 2. FEMALE BONDING DESEGREGATES SPACES 49
Rivals No More: Female Bonding Fosters Empowerment 52
Male Characters as Allies for Gender Spatial Desegregation 72

CONCLUSION 92

WORKS CITED 98

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my major professor, Dr. Michèle A. Schaal, for her guidance throughout the course of this project and my committee members, Dr. Abby Dubisar, Dr. Jeremy Withers, and Dr. David Zimmerman for their support. In addition, I would like to thank my colleagues, faculty, and staff within the English Department and Women's and Gender Studies Program for making my time at Iowa State University a wonderful experience. Finally, thanks to my parents and friends for their encouragement and to my husband for his hours of patience, respect, and love.

ABSTRACT

From *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to more contemporary releases such as *Brave* (2012), scholars have extensively examined the portrayal of gender in the Disney Princess films. A significant shift in representation started to occur in the 21st century with a greater portrayal—albeit still problematic—of gender roles. Two recent films, Disney's animated *Frozen* (2013) and live-action *Maleficent* (2014), significantly illustrate how society's views of women have shifted, causing Disney to adjust its Princesses so as to mirror contemporary, more egalitarian ideals. In this thesis, I will demonstrate how the depiction of sisterly love in *Frozen* and the portrayal of motherhood in *Maleficent* as more important than romantic love establishes a deviation from Disney's prior portrayal of female characters while parodying "traditional" gender depictions. Although both films still lack diversity, patriarchy and gender roles are challenged by female bonding and the desegregation of gendered spaces.

Due to the impact of space or location on gender roles and familial relationships, change must take place at a private and public level to be truly effective. Dualisms—gendered respectively in the masculine and feminine—are present but eventually challenged by Elsa and Anna in *Frozen*, as well as Maleficent and Aurora in *Maleficent*: these characters destabilize the spatially connected patriarchal structures by utilizing personal and political power in both public and private spheres. Therefore, *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, through the emphasis on familial, female bonding and desegregation of gendered locations, depart from previous Disney depictions of gender roles, dualistic spaces, and the notion of "happily ever after" as achieved through heterosexual romance and marriage.

INTRODUCTION

From *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) to more contemporary releases such as *Brave* (2012), scholars have extensively examined the portrayal of gender in Disney Princess films.[1] With a few exceptions, including Amy Davis, much scholarly emphasis focused on the negative, normative display of femininity and historically specific gender roles.[2] For example, Kay Stone and Marcia Lieberman critically analyzed the gendered dichotomies of princess and evil queen roles in folk and fairy tales that are the basis of 20th century Disney films.[3] In particular, foundational research demonstrated that these animated features primarily relied on the passive protagonist versus active antagonist binary.[4] This duality, in turn, created a need for the active male hero to defeat the—usually evil and female—antagonist and provide the passive female protagonist with her "happily ever after" ending, namely fulfillment through heterosexual love and marriage. In addition—with the exception of *The Princess and the Frog* (2009)—Disney princesses have shown little

---

[1]Disney princess movies from the official Disney Princess Franchise include: *Snow White*, *Cinderella* (1950), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Mulan* (1998), *The Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010), and *Brave*—with *Frozen* (2014) expected to join soon, according to Disney. *Maleficent* is a live-action retelling of *Sleeping Beauty* that continues the emerging pattern of increased empowerment in recent, animated Disney Princess films such as *Brave*.

[2] Davis argues in *Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation* (Eastleigh: Libbey, 2006) that even Disney "princesses" commonly seen as passive (Ariel, Jasmine, and Pocahontas) were active and interested in life beyond their love interests (9-10). See also Sharon Downey's "Feminine Empowerment in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*" (185-212) and Jill Birnie Henke, Diane Zimmerman Umble, and Nancy J. Smith's "Construction of the Female Self: Feminist Readings of the Disney Heroine" (229-50), among other studies, who highlighted empowering aspects of Disney gender depictions along with their problematic elements.

[3] See namely Stone ("Things Walt Disney Never Told Us") 44-49; and Lieberman ("Some Day My Prince Will Come': Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale") 384-394.

[4] Along with texts like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979), Disney-specific works such as Jack Zipes' "Breaking the Disney Spell" (21-42) and Elizabeth Bell's "Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies" (107-24), are foundational analyses that explore this binary.

diversity: most of them are white women from, as royal figures, privileged social classes who conform to normative beauty standards (young, thin, able-bodied).[5]

A significant shift in representation started to occur in the 21st century with a greater portrayal—albeit still problematic—of gender roles. For example, Disney/Pixar's *Brave* features an active mother-daughter relationship without focusing on a love interest. Two recent films, Disney's animated *Frozen* (2013) and live-action *Maleficent* (2014), also significantly illustrate how society's views of women shifted, causing Disney to adjust its princesses so as to mirror contemporary, more egalitarian ideals.[6] I argue that the depiction of sisterly love in *Frozen* and the portrayal of motherhood in *Maleficent* as more important than romantic love establishes a deviation from Disney's prior portrayal of female characters while parodying "traditional" gender depictions. Although both films still lack diversity, I posit that patriarchy and gender roles are challenged by female bonding and the desegregation of gendered spaces.

In particular, I use the female-nature connection and the subsequent familial bonding to demonstrate the women's final empowerment. Their success builds throughout the films and results in the dissolution of gendered spaces in *Frozen* and *Maleficent*. Due to the impact of these areas on gender roles and familial relationships, I study the influence of such locations on the protagonists' individual and communal empowerment. Greta Gaard and Patrick D. Murphy provide a definition of ecofeminism focusing on those personal and group connections: "A practical movement for social change arising out of the struggles of women

---

[5] *Aladdin*, *Mulan*, and *Pocahontas* are also well-known Disney Princess films, although Disney's depiction of other races and cultures has been rightfully met with criticism. *Brave* portrayed a more average-sized figure in comparison to previous Disney princesses like *Sleeping Beauty* or *Cinderella*, but this was not continued in *Frozen* and an older and/or differently-abled princess has not yet appeared in the Disney Princess Franchise.
[6] In accordance with previous Disney scholarship, I use the studio or company name rather than individual directors or writers when referencing story choices.

to sustain themselves, their families, and their communities" (2). Therefore, change must take place at a private and public level to be truly effective. Nancy Duncan examines how gender and spatiality impact the contextualization of social roles and interactions within such levels, influenced by the mind/body dualism and public/private division (1-3). Dualisms—gendered respectively in the masculine and feminine—are present but eventually challenged by Elsa and Anna in *Frozen*, as well as Maleficent and Aurora in *Maleficent*: the characters destabilize the spatially connected patriarchal structures by utilizing personal and political power in both public and private spheres.[7] Therefore, *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, through the emphasis on familial, female bonding and desegregation of gendered locations, depart from previous Disney depictions of gender roles, dualistic spaces, and the notion of "happily ever after" as achieved through heterosexual romance and marriage.

My first chapter, "Patriarchal Versus Matriarchal Spaces," focuses on evaluating these spheres within *Frozen* and *Maleficent* through ecofeminist and gendered region lenses. These elements will be broken down into two subsections. The first subsection, "Disney Castles as Masculine, Public Spheres," argues that the masculine, public zone of a castle impacts gender expectations and can be a precarious place for the female characters in these films. Because the castle in *Frozen* exists as the patriarchal center of the kingdom, the men who occupy this masculine-cultural area influence where and how the sisters occupy such

[7] Although many genders and sexualities exist and should be recognized, for the purpose of this analysis, I use language from the male/female binaries and other dichotomies to connect to previous research and work within the increasingly flexible but still dualistic depictions present in Disney films. Judith Butler elucidates, "gender is the variable cultural construction of sex, the myriad and open possibilities of cultural meaning occasioned by a sexed body" and also describes how theorists like Monique Wittig do not distinguish sex and gender because "'sex' is itself a gendered category, fully politically invested, naturalized but not natural" (*Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* 142-43). One's gender may or may not match one's biological sex, but within these movies, male and female heterosexual characters are depicted with male characters often displaying socially expected masculine traits and physicality and female characters usually portraying normative feminine qualities and appearance (cisgender). Therefore, despite such research into the variety of identities and expressions within society, gendered and sexed terms from this analysis are used in conjunction with each other (male/man/masculine, female/woman/feminine) based on commonly anticipated cultural constructions of gender, sex, and sexual orientation binaries.

spaces. Within *Maleficent*, the eponymous character tries to protect herself and her kingdom from the physically and emotionally corruptive human realm represented by the castle and male king. Because these male regions are denied to the female characters and prove antagonistic to them, they find strength in feminine-nature regions. The second subsection, "Nature as Feminine, Private Sphere" explicates this association between the female characters and nature, which ultimately leads to a deeper link with matriarchal political power as well. In contrast to the masculine domination of nature, *Frozen* shows that Elsa's personal power of ice and snow cultivates through and with her female-nature connection. Although these abilities connect to classic villainess personifications, she utilizes her abilities as a protagonist striving to empower herself and her sister. Maleficent also has a potent, nature-connected power and political position. While the undervaluing of women and nature puts the Moors at risk, the nature location also allows Maleficent to heal from her past and develop a loving relationship with Aurora.

My second chapter, "Female Bonding Desegregates Spaces," focuses on how bonding within spheres leads to improvements toward gender and nature balance through integration and social change. This chapter is also separated into two subsections. The first subsection, "Rivals No More, Female Bonding Fosters Empowerment," showcases the contrast between "traditional" Disney elements and the female relationships present in these two films. Within *Frozen*, Anna's healing "true love's kiss" does not arise through heterosexual romance but through her familial love with Elsa. Through such love, Elsa learns to wield her female-nature and political power within the masculine, public sphere as well as the private, feminine sphere, breaking down the segregation of gendered spaces. This section also scrutinizes the shift from previously established female roles and relationships in Disney to

the growth of the familial bond between Maleficent and Aurora in *Maleficent*. The mother-daughter relationship in *Maleficent* defies these protagonist/antagonist dichotomies by developing Maleficent's love for Aurora rather than her hatred or their rivalry. Maleficent then uses her love and trust for Aurora to unify their gendered dominions. The second subsection, "Male Characters as Allies for Gender Spatial Desegregation" incorporates a new depiction of masculinity more aligned with intersectional, third-wave feminism.[8] Kristoff echoes Elsa's actions and values through his own strong connection with nature, representing an ecofeminist male presence within such a landscape. Through his respect of the sisters' power within public and private spheres, as well as demonstrating his own abilities in both, Kristoff proves he supports male and female inclusion in various locations, which facilitates the blending of gendered areas. This male ally pattern continues within *Maleficent* as Diaval assists her bonding with Aurora that, in contrast to the dangerous masculinity of other male characters, ultimately leads to a merging of gendered spaces. His servant role for Maleficent showcases a problematic dynamic within their relationship, yet his friendship and co-parent role with Maleficent represents an increase in gender flexibility and the potential for future egalitarian relationships.

[8] Intersectionality, in *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), is defined as "an integrative perspective that emphasizes the intersection of several attributes, for example, gender, race, class, and nation" (Kirk and Okazawa-Rey G-4).

CHAPTER 1

PATRIACHAL VERSUS MATRIARCHAL SPACES

Frozen, inspired by Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen," focuses on the lives of two sisters, Anna and Elsa, within the realm of Arendelle. As young children they are very close, but an accident with Elsa's powers (magical use of ice and snow) results in Anna's loss of memory and Elsa's confinement within the castle. After their parents die, they are briefly united for Elsa's coronation. While Anna revels in her "love at first sight" meeting with a fellow aristocrat, Hans of the Southern Isles, Elsa's magical powers become known, accidentally turning the weather in Arendelle to winter. While she runs away to be free to use her powers without harming others, Anna follows her. On her journey to find Elsa, Anna meets Kristoff, his reindeer Sven, and Olaf, a childlike snowman. Elsa, still wanting to keep Anna safe, pushes her away and accidently hits her with an icy blast to the heart. Kristoff takes Anna to his adoptive family, the rock trolls, for help. They reveal that only true love can save her. While Hans captures Elsa and brings her to the castle, Kristoff takes Anna to Hans to receive her "true love" cure. Despite his previous romantic interest in Anna, Hans refuses to help her and reveals that his courtship was only a deception: his plot was to take over Arendelle. However, Anna reunites with Elsa and saves her as she turns to ice. Through the power of true love—the sisterly bond between them—,Anna saves herself, and Elsa learns to use love to thaw the winter weather. A budding romance emerges between Anna and Kristoff while Hans and the other perpetrators are punished, enabling Elsa to reclaim her throne.

Maleficent is a recreation of Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*, with the eponymous, original "evil" queen as the film's protagonist. Maleficent first appears as a young fairy in a territory

called the Moors, situated next to a human realm. She fulfills a leadership role among her people but also befriends a human boy named Stefan, despite past conflicts between their lands. Although they both seem to fall in love, as they grow up, he aligns himself with his human nature—a state portrayed as ambitious and cruel. Maleficent, meanwhile, becomes a powerful protector of her dominion from King Henry—the human kingdom's patriarchal ruler, represented by his dark castle and armored soldiers—who wants to invade the Moors. Maleficent defeats King Henry, but Stefan tricks her and removes her wings to become the next king. In revenge for this violation, Maleficent curses Stefan's baby, Aurora. However, she also follows Aurora as a child (raised in the woods by three pixie guardians) and intervenes to help raise her with the assistance of a raven named Diaval. As a result, Aurora considers Maleficent her fairy godmother. In the meantime, Stefan takes possession of the throne but becomes more paranoid within his castle walls. As he orders further violent attacks on the Moors, Maleficent develops an increasing attachment to the growing Aurora. Yet, before moving to the Moors with Maleficent, Aurora finds out the truth about the curse and her identity as a princess. Leaving her guardians and the prince (Philip) she just met, she runs away to her father and the castle. Maleficent and Diaval go to help her despite knowing the curse was fulfilled: Aurora pricks her finger on a spinning wheel and falls into a coma. Instead of the prince's kiss waking Aurora, true love's kiss from godmother to goddaughter cures the curse. Aurora then helps to reunite Maleficent with her wings, who then defeats King Stefan and crowns Aurora as Queen of both the human domain and the Moors.

Social expectations within these settings coincide with the gendered spaces the characters occupy in both films. Simone de Beauvoir states: "Humanity is male, and male defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself; she is not considered an autonomous

being. . . . She is the Other" (5-6). This prevailing social belief leads the public sphere of power and privilege to be attributed to masculinity, whereas the private sphere of domesticity and family usually belong to femininity. Thus, Duncan analyzes that such binaries "construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude, and suppress gender and sexual difference, preserving traditional patriarchal and heterosexist power structures" (128). These power constructions are present within gendered locations, which are commonly divided by culture (masculine) and nature (feminine). Private, nature places, like femininity in general, are thus seen as Other and lesser, separating women from the cultural, political sphere of patriarchy. These "traditional" power structures are made obvious in Disney films, such as *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, through the use of masculine, castle locations and feminine, nature landscapes.

The castle structures in both films are male-cultural centers of their kingdoms that impact the female characters' ability to wield political, ruling authority. Patriarchy, as defined by Gillian Howie in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), includes the "general system, where social practices, institutions (church, family, state), and cultural images organize the power that men exert over women" (239). As castles within *Frozen* and *Maleficent* represent this masculine power over women and feminine places, they are patriarchal structures ruled by kings or patriarchal figures. Within *Frozen*, not only must Elsa contend with her father's control of her magical abilities (although well-intended), but she must also deal with other negative patriarchal figures threatening both sisters' political and personal well being. These masculine influences also negatively impact the sisters' bond, an indirect subversion of female power. In *Maleficent*, the masculine world, represented by the castle, harms women physically and emotionally. Specifically, Maleficent's antagonistic reaction to these dangerous masculine forces and

subsequent "rivalry" with Aurora (seeking vengeance through patriarchal methods) results in further pain to herself and the Moors.

Women are also impacted, albeit differently than in masculine locations, based on time spent within feminine landscapes. *Frozen* explores the empowering influence of nature on Elsa's development as a queen with powerful environment-based abilities. Away from the masculine domination of nature and the patriarchal, public area of the castle, she cultivates her abilities and explores her true, complete self as a matriarch of her nature space.[9] Although this power makes her a potential danger, she ultimately strengthens through her nature experience and the love of her sister. *Maleficent* also showcases the influence and empowering quality of these landscapes. Maleficent, complicated by her antagonistic actions, ultimately establishes herself as a formidable but "just" ruler for her kingdom. And it is within this nature location that she develops a loving relationship with Aurora, which leads to Maleficent's healing and the establishment of a matriarchy.

Disney Castles as Masculine, Public Spheres

Disney films showcase an interest in medieval settings through the utilization of castles, which represent the masculine, public sphere. Castles are often classified as such because they serve as military structures as well as residences (Johnson 13). Historically, the public, military space, dominated by male figures, and the residential, domestic space result in a complex gendered environment. Roberta Gilchrist illustrates how these gendered structures and boundaries influence human and social identities: "It is particularly in the

---

[9] Matriarchy, as defined in the *Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism (*London: Routledge, 2001), is "a matriarchal society . . . led by women, in which the line of descent is traced through the female, rather than the male line" (Gamble 271). While the female line of descent is clearly a key feature of matriarchy, I will primarily use this term to describe a society or state of female power and leadership.

context of architectural and settlement space that gender is constituted, in other words, in the rooms and spaces which men and women frequent" (49-50). Naturally, Disney does not depict historically accurate medieval worlds or the true complexity of castle configurations, let alone the reality of gender and sex continuums or blurred spaces. Nonetheless, these structures, in *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, keep the hierarchy at stake in their architecture and organization: they are occupied by patriarchal figures, are associated with the public, political sphere, and impact the gendering and safety of women.

Although *Frozen*'s 19th century Norwegian setting is clearly different from *Maleficent*'s medieval one, the presence of castles remains obvious in both films. The wall enclosing the castle area in *Frozen*, along with the emphasis on the gate, retains the protective element of this structure, while the bright openness links to the "Disnification" of the "castle" iconography (Giroux "Animating Youth: The Disnification of Children's Culture" 55).[10] Despite the time period difference within the settings of these productions, the spaces in *Frozen* and *Maleficent* connect directly with Susan Murray's statement: "Since the castle was jointly used as a seat of law and government, a place of worship, and a fortified residence, the use of space and the choice of architectural design were intended to inspire respect, reverence, and awe in the observer" (17). For example, in *Frozen*, a wide view of the entire castle location along with the surrounding landscape establishes the kingdom of Arendelle along with the large interior areas (like the ballroom) that the characters occupy (12:47-17:00). Similarly, in *Maleficent*, sweeping shots display the castle's imposing profile in comparison to the Moors and the grandeur (and later gloom) of its inner

[10] Henry Giroux describes the educational and economic impact of the Disney corporation on American culture, referencing the term "Disnification" within his article "Animating Youth: The Disnification of Children's Culture" (55). Using this term connects to the cultural assumption that Disney, despite being a company focused on making money, represents education and family values.

rooms (27:06-27:18, 1:09:59-1:10:33). The time spent on showing the exterior and interior of castles within *Frozen* and *Maleficent* therefore links to the desire for creating wonder, while showcasing leaders within these locations establishes an aura of respect for their public, political power.

Because the castle and the governing body or patriarchal figure within are associated with one another, they are also allied with the official landscape. Rob Nixon clarifies: "Imposed official landscapes typically discount spiritualized vernacular landscapes, severing webs of accumulated cultural meaning and treating the landscape as if it were uninhabited by the living" (17). Therefore, the official region (masculine) exploits the vernacular one, associated with nature or "lesser" beings (feminine). And as Val Plumwood explicates, these types of dualistic beliefs from dominant ideologies perpetrate social division within society (*Environmental Culture* 19). Due to the correlation between dichotomies and gendered spaces, such beliefs and physical divisions impact the social interactions of characters within these films.

The queens (Elsa and Maleficent) in *Frozen* and *Maleficent* experience restrictions based on their gender within castles, yet the way they uniquely navigate and change such spaces continues a more constructive pattern started over the past decade. In previous Disney Princess films, few scenes take place within castles, and the few rooms shown are commonly dominated by a male patriarch or include a woman trapped or in danger.[11] These patriarchal figures control the political power of the masculine, public sphere, relegating female

[11] Snow White has an evil stepmother in a castle, and the heroine does not have access to this space. Cinderella is relegated to ballroom scenes, while Sleeping Beauty is shown within the spindle room and hall for brief moments (although the original Maleficent had her own dark dungeon and castle). Ariel and Jasmine are supposed to live in palaces, but the emphasis remains on the feeling of being controlled by their fathers. Pocahontas, Mulan, and Tiana do not live in castles, but Rapunzel is trapped in a tower. Merida also feels confined by her mother's education, which takes place within a castle.

characters to the domestic, private sphere and/or nature. The princesses depicted among these medieval spaces and other historical settings must therefore, as Paul Sturtevant analyzes, deal with a "gender paradigm [that] portrays females who, no matter how independent or able they may seem at the opening of the film, ultimately conform to heteronormative romantic relationships in which they passively accept their heroic aristocratic male" (86). Along with this expectation of eventual adaption, in order for one character to stand out as the exception, the setting and other characters conform to these "traditional" gender roles and expectations. Both *Frozen* and *Maleficent* follow the established paradigm of dichotomous spaces within historical settings, perpetuating the gendered expectations of the characters within such locations. Yet, these recent Disney Princess movies continue a pattern of active, politically powerful princesses and queens that, although they must navigate the male-dominated landscape of the castle, work with other women rather than focusing on heterosexual romance to achieve success within the film.

Since the castle in *Frozen* serves as the patriarchal center of the kingdom, the spaces the sisters occupy impact them. While Daphne Spain states, "'gendered spaces' separate women from knowledge used by men to produce and reproduce power and privilege," Elsa and Anna's class privilege protects them from this problem (3). Utilizing their political power as women in the public sphere does not seem to faze either aristocrat, as both give orders nonchalantly. However, Spain's argument that spatial organization affects gender and social interactions also persists in *Frozen*; for example, where the sisters interact with each other and others establish implications for their gender and social roles—princesses of Arendelle (7). Specifically, as children, Anna comes into Elsa's bedroom and they play

together in the ballroom, solidifying their close relationship and foreshadowing both Olaf's creation and the danger Elsa's power poses toward Anna (3:40). After the accident, Elsa's bedroom becomes closed off to Anna, and Elsa stands alone in a room with her father. Elsa and Anna are both princesses of Arendelle, but Elsa is the heiress and responsible for learning this political role and thus must occupy the masculine spaces of politics. Their separation, engineered by a patriarchal figure, negatively impacts the sisters' relationship, indirectly subverting the joint empowerment their bond brings.

Elsa and Anna both deal with isolation, but Elsa's future as Queen and the need to conceal her magical power lead Elsa's confinement and Anna's isolation to emerge through the castle's patriarchal spaces differently. Elsa spends her time in spaces that depict the masculine environment of her father, the previous king, and connect to her sense of duty as future Queen rather than her individuality. Along with her cool-colored bedroom (9:38), she appears in what looks like her father's study—filled with books and his royal portrait (15:48)—before venturing into the hallways (16:22), ballroom (20:06, 20:48), and church for her coronation (18:48, 19:42). These rooms are associated with the castle and therefore the king, a patriarchal figure, and the public, political space the royal position occupies (9:03). Although privacy and comfort are established in these castle spaces, segregation also plays a powerful role. Even when their parents died and her coronation approaches, Elsa remains afraid she will be unable to conceal her abilities within the public sphere, but her insistence on closing herself off physically and emotionally does not qualify as a "chosen" isolation. Instead, looking up at her father's looming portrait (as King) while preparing for her coronation portrays Elsa's desire to obey her father's wishes and internalized fulfillment of her political duty. A part of Elsa's feeling of responsibility also includes the need to protect

others from herself. As such, she was even afraid of her parents touching her because of her powers (9:45). Their legacy impacts her dedication to her position, which becomes clearer as she attempts to mirror her father's portrait (15:48). In contrast, Anna is depicted in open, warm-colored spaces and able to move freely, but these large rooms also seem to intensify her solitariness (8:45, 9:14, 9:20, and 9:26). During "Do You Want to Build a Snowman?," the sisters no longer appear in the same film frame, isolating them cinematically as well. Each time Anna tries to talk to Elsa, she must stand or sit in the public hallway. For instance, Elsa and Anna are shown together as children in the open hall (4:34), in sharp contrast to their separation as young adults (11:16-11:19). Anna's focus on open doors, fun, music, light, meeting people, and her seemingly single chance to find "the One" creates a stark difference from Elsa's mantra, "Don't let them in, don't let them see / be the good girl you always have to be / conceal, don't feel / put on a show / make one wrong move and everyone will know" in the song "For the First Time in Forever" (15:44). Besides the private study, Elsa is expected to be present within the public rooms of the political sphere, although these seem to be currently occupied by Anna as she plays alone. These verses repeat the gender injunctions their father taught Elsa, mirroring verbal expectations with physical orders. While Anna's smiles and rapid movements amid open windows, bright colors, and sunshine are present throughout this song (including 13:32, 13:46, 14:10, 14:35), Elsa's fear and seriousness within confined locations become particularly clear (16:04). Additionally, as Elsa needs to gather her courage through slow and purposeful movements, Anna runs eagerly and fearlessly to meet the public. Thus, the added pressure of becoming Queen as well as the control of her magical ability creates more restrictions and responsibilities for Elsa within such a masculine environment.

Along with the castle itself, patriarchal control through their father, the King, was unavoidable for Anna and Elsa as young girls, which directly affects Elsa's ability to wield her personal and magical power and impacts the sisters' relationship within these masculine spaces. Duncan emphasizes the impact of a father figure with her statement: "The home . . . usually thought to be gendered feminine has also traditionally been subject to the patriarchal authority of the husband and father" (131). Elsa's father controls the castle as their home, while her mother remains voiceless. As such, despite these private, domestic matters being typically associated with maternal authority, their father makes decisions for the family. For instance, Elsa's magical abilities brought herself and Anna joy, and the origin of this magic seems innate, but when a childhood accident hurts Anna, Elsa receives the blame. Out of fear, their father first focuses on spatially segregating Elsa and controlling her magical power. After making the danger of a "frozen heart" clear, Anna's memories of Elsa's abilities became erased with her father's approval, which also leads to his encouragement of Elsa's self-isolation. Anna never gets told why Elsa's door remains literally and figuratively shut to her, despite her pleading through the song "Do You Want to Build a Snowman?" to enter Elsa's room and come back into her life. This patriarchal interference separates the sisters from one another, causing them to lose the close relationship they once shared. Consequently, their father has spatial control over the castle as the king, thereby regulating the spaces and figures within—even claiming bodily control over Elsa.

When confronted with the danger of Elsa's personal power, Elsa's father reacts with a well-intended but misguided patriarchal focus on fearing her potential and controlling her mind and body in order to protect her political authority. Kneeling in front of her, he puts gloves on Elsa's hands to hide the source of her magic and prevent its release; and while

doing so, he has her repeat the need to conceal rather than feel (9:02). As patriarch of the country in a "father" or king role, he becomes afraid of how his people will react and wants to maintain his royal position, which will be passed on to Elsa. Therefore, hiding her magical ability remains an imperative to maintain her political viability. This emphasis placed on controlling her body by managing her mind and emotions allows Elsa to assume her authoritative position as heiress to the throne within the public sphere. His manipulation matches what Duncan refers to: "Women who have managed to be admitted to active participation in the public sphere have usually done so according to implicitly male rules, [which] has to do with the mind/body dualism" (3). Elsa's destiny as Queen continues throughout these childhood experiences, even though her isolation makes active participation difficult. Her father's emotionally distant mentality matches the male-attributed mastery of reason over emotions, and in doing so, he ignores Elsa's right to control her own body and isolates her from access to the healthy utilization of her personal, nature-oriented abilities. Thus, he perpetuates harmful gendered dualisms within the patriarchal location he occupies.

When the castle gates open in honor of Elsa's coronation, additional patriarchal figures threaten both sisters' political and personal power. Although the castle represents Elsa and Anna's home, often deemed private, this place also remains a public space due to its connection to royal authority. As Duncan claims, "Both private and public spaces are heterogeneous and not all space is clearly private or public. Space is thus subject to various territorializing and deterritorializing processes whereby local control is fixed, claimed, [and] challenged" (129). Therefore, when the Duke of Weselton secretly entreats Arendelle to "open those gates so I may unlock your secrets and exploit your riches" (while rubbing his hands together like a stereotypical villain), he threatens both the public, economic sphere of

the country as trading partner and the private, feminine domain of Elsa, a Queen he appears to want to exploit and conquer (12:29-12:35). The Duke acts as a visiting dignitary that mentions the trade relations between his kingdom and Arendelle several times in the film, making him an important political and economic figure despite his goofy physical appearance and mannerisms. He may only represent his realm rather than rule it himself, but regardless, his obvious greed, arrogance, and behavior linked to imperialist conquest—a part of patriarchal spatial structuring and marriage practices—are aspects of his overall depiction. Confined by masculine rules and forced to keep her personal power a secret, Elsa initially seems unable to challenge such a threat to her political sovereignty. Their father, now deceased, represented an already present patriarchal influence, within the masculine legacy of the castle itself as a royal space, but he was not an overtly sinister influence. The Duke, on the other hand, persists as a direct threat, along with Hans.

While Anna accepts blame for Elsa's eventual outburst and the revealing of her magical abilities, the situation only presents itself through masculine influences like Hans. He appears as an affectionate love interest for Anna, sharing a duet, "Love is an Open Door," in which they express their love and get engaged (23:40-25:36). Nevertheless, their potential marriage poses an invasion of privacy for Elsa that further problematizes the concealment of her magical abilities. Caught off guard by Hans' presence and the possibility of inviting more people into the castle who may learn her secret, Elsa becomes agitated. Additionally, the castle remains a public sphere, and figures that are invited in this space (like Hans could be) would have the connections to theoretically influence her politically. Hans is a Prince from the Southern Isles, another kingdom that trades with Arendelle. Although as the thirteenth brother in line for the throne he would not become ruler in his own land, he could impact

economic relations between the two countries and increase his own position if he married Anna. To prevent these possibilities, Elsa orders the gates closed, effectively turning the castle from its open, official capacity to a potentially more private, female-friendly sphere. As Queen, those around Elsa follow her decisive orders. However, Anna struggles to follow her instructions, especially when Elsa declares: "You can't marry a man you just met" (26:37). Hurt that Elsa seems to be shutting her out again instead of being excited about her future wedding, Anna intervenes in a rash, public confrontation that leads to the release of Elsa's magical power. Asking, "what are you so afraid of?," she grabs at Elsa's glove and tries to prevent her from leaving (27:02). Elsa, now pushed into a corner with everyone staring, gestures out of anger and fear, unleashing ice from her now ungloved hand (27:29). The outburst catches the Duke's immediate attention, as well as Anna's surprise. Even though Elsa continues to run before even noticing the extent of damage her ice magic creates, the Duke instigates further violence by labeling her a "monster" who "has cursed this land" (28:24, 29:42). Convinced her magic is "sorcery," he tries to stop her (27:36, 28:17)—his fear increasing after she accidentally shoots ice at him (28:23, 29:43). However, Elsa's facial expression and body language imply that her reactions are unconscious defense mechanisms rather than a conscious choice to harm anyone.

Elsa's release of her personal power within the castle initially has a negative impact on her political power as well as Anna's. As Elsa continues to flee out the castle into the courtyard, her power forms angry, dangerous shapes—showing that when her power manifests itself as an adult woman in public, masculine spaces, her magic becomes defensive through her fear (28:12). While Elsa's escape appears dangerous to others and therefore only beneficial for herself, Spain argues, "once spatial barriers [are] breached . . . the stratification

system beg[ins] to change" (5). Consequently, the "traditional" gender hierarchy present within a patriarchal space like the castle could change now that this physical boundary, and the use of personal power within a public sphere, has been crossed. For example, such a breach of boundaries and expectations provides an additional reason for Anna's ability to leave the castle boundary and follow in her sister's footsteps. Feeling responsible for Elsa's departure and failing to stop her with her pleas (28:47), she defends her sister, accepts the blame, and decides her sisterly duty should be to go after her (30:16). Elsa's accidental freezing of the fjord also spurs Anna's quest, as her kingdom needs her and Elsa to reverse this weather. In the meantime, Elsa's self-imposed exile left Anna (next in line for the throne) with the political power in the public sphere, which she passes on to Hans (unaware of his true intentions) so she can go after Elsa (30:26). Therefore, despite the breach of female power within this masculine space, the potential for change has not yet been fully developed. Anna and Elsa's departure before a more complete desegregation of gendered spaces could occur, an aspect explored in the second chapter, instead results in both sisters dealing with dubious holds to their political positions and personal lives.

Patriarchal control and its damaging effects also exist within the public sphere of castles and the associated male figures in *Maleficent*. The patriarchal landscape within this film—a realm of politics that does not appear to be populated by many women—remains occupied by a male ruler, while Maleficent lives in an entirely different region. Beyond the structural control of spaces and masculine roles in *Frozen*, these patriarchal figures also represent a direct, physical violence toward Maleficent and her kingdom.[12] In particular, the

[12] This isolation of women is reminiscent of *Frozen*, but unlike the politically active Elsa and Anna, Maleficent serves as a ruler within a nature landscape outside of the masculine, public sphere. Thus, this separation of

human world (led initially by King Henry and his castle of soldiers) goes to war with the Moors (Maleficent's nature-based land), and King Stefan commits physical and mental violence in the form of a suggested rape scene—leading to an escalation of violence between the territories.

Maleficent's distinction between the human kingdom and the Moors perpetuates the historical dichotomy between human/animal and culture/nature in which masculine spaces represent the human, cultural, and public sphere. The narrator in the beginning of the film states:

> Once upon a time there were two kingdoms that were the worst of neighbors . . . . In one kingdom lived folk like you and me, with a vain and greedy king to rule over them. They were forever discontent and envious of the wealth and beauty of their neighbors. (0:38)

The human king of this political sphere represents the castle (and vice versa) and is described as negatively as the unhappy, jealous people he rules over. Kings ruled by succession or through conquest during the medieval time period, made obvious through the direct antagonism and efforts toward invading the Moors. As such, the patriarchal dominion within this film establishes a masculine ruler who perpetuates the violence the human realm and its people appear to represent.

Other than Maleficent's later actions, the Moors only react defensively to this male violence, whereas the human kings lead soldiers into offensive battles from their "official" kingdom to the Moors. The narrator states, Maleficent "never understood the greed and envy of men. But she was to learn, for the human king had heard of a growing power in the Moors,

---

gendered spaces within *Maleficent*'s divided kingdoms is even more pronounced than within *Frozen*'s segregated rooms. Yet, rather than being a complete return to former gendered Disney patterns, this retelling continues the important emphasis on female bonding and helpful male characters over heterosexual romance.

and he sought to strike it down" (9:20). This fear of others' power and desire to dominate drives the greed of the first human royal, King Henry. Bringing his troops with domesticated horses and metal armor to the edge of the Moors, he arrives to face a grown-up Maleficent. King Henry states to his soldiers (who appear to all be male): "There they are, the mysterious Moors where no one dares to venture for fear of the magical creatures that lurk within. Well, I say crush them" (9:42, 10:12). The Moors is the name of the land, and by extension, the creatures that live within that nature landscape. Because this term relates to those who occupy it, such as Maleficent, such fright could be referencing the human dread of her body as a female "Other". Rather than curiosity or a desire to learn from the Moors, the unknown (associated with the female/feminine) leads to a misogynistic or fearful, violent reaction. Additionally, Maleficent directly threatens King Henry's perceived official power when she does not recognize him as a sovereign, so he dismisses her warnings to leave and attacks. However, the King and his men are not a match to the combined forces of Maleficent and those she calls forth with her, and the relationship between these leaders and their soldiers displays a sharp contrast in cultural and personal values. The respect between Maleficent and those who protect the Moors with her appears mutual or reciprocal, whereas, the soldiers seem to obey their King out of fear. For instance, while the soldiers run off the battlefield after the King becomes injured (13:31), Maleficent turns and bows in return to those who fought with her. Additionally, when defeated and dying, King Henry reflects on his subjects' lack of love or true loyalty: "I see you waiting for me to die" (14:42). Although the film never shows whether or not his subjects really want the Moors' treasures, King Henry states his willingness to give away his crown (and daughter) in exchange for revenge against Maleficent. He promises this to a group of men who look like nobility rather than to Stefan,

who fulfills more of a servant role in this scene (14:28), but Stefan listens and appears eager to be considered the kingdom's successor—thereby continuing personal and communal violence between the realms. Thus, Disney's portrayal of masculine violence within *Maleficent* seems to overshadow the ability to love or value others and the spaces they occupy.

The devaluing of nature, associated with women and the creatures within this space, leads to direct violence from the castle and kings—appearing prominently in King Stefan's attack of Maleficent. Ecofeminists like Plumwood explain how dualisms separate human and nature and encourage an emphasis of human privilege through the control and "process of othering" of women and nature (*Environmental Culture* 4, 17). Such a separation stresses the power associated with masculine authority figures in the human kingdom and the danger they pose to those who are associated with nature, forming Maleficent's vulnerability as a woman and fairy. Stefan's act of violence toward Maleficent takes place in her home, but the political motivation from the patriarchal kingdom of the castle propels his actions. As such, Catharine MacKinnon's declaration that all sexual intercourse between a man and woman is rape due to patriarchal control over the law cannot apply to all situations, but her statement, "what is wrong with rape is that it is an act of the subordination of women to men," echoes the gender and sexual violence in *Maleficent* (291). This forced subordination stems from a (often masculine) desire to dominate a partner's mind and body. Stefan displays these behaviors by first tricking Maleficent, seeking to control her ability to consent or defend herself through the use of what would be labeled today as a date rape drug. Claiming to be there to warn her and asking for her trust, she believes and forgives him—allowing him to hold her and takes a drink he offers her. The camera then zooms to a bottle on the ground

after she falls asleep (17:02). Stefan checks that she is asleep and appears unwilling to kill her, yet does not hesitate to grab the iron chain (18:07). Thus, his crime appears to be premeditated violence rather than any form of mercy. He then slices off her wings with an iron chain and takes them as a trophy and sign of his loyalty to King Henry. This treatment of Maleficent as an object or "Other" rather than as a living being worthy of respect and health thwarts the opportunity for peace between these dualistic kingdoms. Stephan's choice to pursue patriarchal power thus leads to an escalation of violence between them and their lands; yet, he receives a reward (the crown and a wife), while Maleficent wakes up in confusion, delivering a horrifying scream of pain and anger.

Alison Piepmeier, in *The Women's Movement Today* (Westport: Greenwood P, 2006), defines rape as "a sexual act performed against the victim's will; it is a particularly intimate violation of a victim's body and autonomy" (270).[13] Legal definitions describe penetration as a part of rape; however, the scene in *Maleficent* does not appear directly sexual or involve penetration. Nevertheless, the clear violation of Maleficent's body and autonomy without consent matches this definition of rape, and Maleficent's initial reaction as a survivor displays powerfully emotional as well as physical effects. Because the intrusion occurred in her home, the Moors, her struggle to heal begins within this space. For instance, due to the defilement of her physical body, she must relearn how to walk with the help of a staff. Maleficent leaves the place where she was attacked, taking a branch off the ground and using her yellow, nature-based power to make a walking stick—all while moving slowly as if in

---

[13] For clarity and flow, the following abbreviations will be used for parenthetical references:
Ken Gillam and Shannon R. Wooden "Post-Princess Models of Gender" and *Pixar's Boy Stories*
Rebecca C. Hains, Leslie Heywood, Alison Piepmeier, and Deborah Siegel: *The Women's Movement Today*
Michael Kimmel *Manhood in America*
Marcia Lieberman "Some Day My Prince Will Come"
Val Plumwood *Environmental Culture*

great pain (20:02). Where previously she could soar above the clouds to see the sun and swoop down to fight her enemies, without her wings she must adjust to the limits on her freedom such a change in mobility creates. Maleficent also experiences emotional trauma as these physical changes impact her autonomy and sense of self. Owing to her role as the protector of the Moors, losing her wings (her sense of strength) creates another motivation to leave her home. Without these parts of her natural body, she may also feel shame and not want to be around those who still have their wings—reminders of her loss. Most importantly, her wings represent her identity as a fairy and thus her sense of being "whole," contributing to Maleficent's physical and emotional changes as she attempts to fill or repair this gap. Yet, the traumatic experience within her home as well as the continued danger from the patriarchal space shapes her transformation in ways that challenge this ability to heal.

Angry and bitter, Maleficent becomes unable to trust or love the world around her and begins to emulate the violence and power present within the masculine, castle space and the patriarchal figures who dominate them. The narrator in *Maleficent* states: "It was said only a great hero or a terrible villain might bring them [the two kingdoms] together" (0:48). Despite connections to "mal," which the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines as "bad," her name also has similarities with magnificent, showcasing her potential for "beauty" and great deeds. Her name also could be broken down as "male"-ficent, connecting to her use of masculine authority and violence in response to the male ruler, King Stefan.[14] Maleficent in fact represents both wonderful and terrible qualities, but transforms into an "evil" antagonist (like in *Sleeping Beauty*) after she is raped. Pushing everything and everyone away, she leaves the Moors for the ruins of a castle, creating her own oppressive and dark space.

---

[14] Interestingly too, in French, "un maléfice" (masc.) means a curse or evil magic trick, which Maleficent acts out against Aurora.

Maleficent's magic glows yellow until she hears of Stefan's coronation: "He did this to me so he would be King" (24:07)—her disgust and fury (perhaps even envy) resulting in a burst of green magic that King Stefan sees from the castle (24:26). Although she still acts as protector of her kingdom, her magic continues to manifest as a green, poisonous light as she creates twisted, dead shapes, like a giant wall of thorns to defend the Moors' nature space (33:50, 43:47). Compensating or attempting to make herself whole, she saves Diaval, a raven, and he becomes her wings—an imperfect filling of her physical void. Rightfully upset, he admits to not being certain he appreciates the transformation into a human, yet when Maleficent tells him to "stop complaining" (implying he should be grateful), he instead promises: "In return for saving my life, I am your servant" and bows to her without an equal response (22:45-23:00). Maleficent continues to give him orders instead of creating a cooperative relationship, establishing herself as a master over him and emphasizing a sense of "ownership" for someone who has selflessly sworn to serve her. This replication of violence in her treatment of others continues as Maleficent creates a throne within the Moors and has all the creatures within kneel before her (25:17, 25:39-25:55), establishing her dominion over them. Such patriarchalization or use of human, masculine authority and darkness in her character makes them fear her and creates a literal shadow over the land (25:02). With regard to gender performance, Judith Butler explicates: "a feminist view argues that gender should be overthrown, eliminated, or rendered fatally ambiguous precisely because it is always a sign of subordination for women" (xiii). Since Maleficent's masculinity leads her to treat Diaval and the Moors as subordinates, she needs to adapt her gender performance to one that would be more liberating to herself and others. In the meantime, however, Maleficent's appropriation of masculinity has not only led to the

subordination of the Moors and Diaval but also culminates in her vengeful cursing of Aurora—thereby continuing the cycle of violence through her patriarchalization.

Seeming to start from the castle and its kings, such violence develops between kingdoms and appears to worsen its process as individual acts of brutality lead to additional atrocities. Academics have studied violence not only as a cycle but also as a structure that can be viewed as a product or a process (Lawrence and Karim 5, 11). King Stefan's brutal attack on the sleeping Maleficent represents a single incident, yet the violence his kingdom and he personally commits toward her and her realm does not remain isolated to a product or set of products. In fact, the film never directly reveals why Maleficent and Stefan's parents are dead, but the previous human and Moors war could have been the reason. Such a cycle of violence acts as a process, sustained based on the portrayed greed and fear of humans. Therefore, "violence as process . . . . becomes part of the expectation of the living, whether framed as revenge or as fear" (Lawrence and Karim 12). King Henry, as described previously, attempted to invade the Moors out of fear and a desire to control, continuing the cycle of violence between the two kingdoms. Justifiably angry and bitter at these actions and the more personal attack from King Stefan, Maleficent internalizes this misogyny. Thus affected, she becomes a persistent part of the violence process—transforming herself and focusing on vengeance against Aurora. Consequently, Maleficent first enters the castle dressed all in black, which makes her horns become more pronounced, and seems to use her staff for theatrics rather than walking assistance. The prominence of her horns and use of a staff, besides matching the "evil" depictions of the Christian Devil, may also symbolically show the growth of her phallic or patriarchal power (29:10). Additionally, her ears become covered after the attack, perhaps representing her interest in expressing her anger over

listening, a change that does not revert back until the very end of the film (during the crowning scene). She also has a cold laugh and shows no respect for the pixies, who are there to try and create goodwill between the kingdoms. However, rather than destroying the castle or King Stefan, Maleficent chooses to hurt his innocent baby, Aurora. Although Aurora's mother and the pixies also try to intervene, Maleficent invokes the curse (30:55-33:00). Even when King Stefan gets down on his knees and begs her, Maleficent only adds that the curse can be revoked by "true love's kiss," which neither of them believes in due to Stefan's betrayal. Thus, she not only transformed based on the masculine influence of Stefan, but her climactic moment of true "evil" takes place within the human, patriarchal structure. Beyond defending her kingdom by making walls so "the Moors might never again suffer the touch of any human," Maleficent went to the castle with the intent to harm and "reveled in the sorrow that her curse had brought" (33:54, 34:01). This offensive act displays a desire to cause those within the patriarchal space (even the innocent among them) pain rather than a defensive need to protect her people from future destruction. Consequently, she causes a continuation of violence that impacts other women, including further injury to herself.

In addition to Maleficent's transformation, King Stefan also changes as he becomes increasingly entrenched in his patriarchal role. Increasingly controlled by his own fear, the narrator states he "shut himself behind the walls of his castle" as he continues the cycle of violence through retaliation at Maleficent and the Moors—who have no active part in her actions (33:40). The narrator describes: "as the days went on, Stefan darkened, further consumed by paranoia and vengeance" (38:31). For example, he sends soldiers to attack the thorn wall surrounding the Moors using fire and weapons (38:44). Unconcerned with the lack of success and the amount of death and destruction, he tells his soldiers, "nothing is

indestructible, not the wall, not Maleficent, not even her curse" (39:47). As the film continues, he becomes steadily more paranoid and mentally unstable. In one such scene, the castle appears at night, with only moonlight filtering into the pitch-black and dusty room, as he sits across from the case that holds Maleficent's wings, captured like a hunting trophy (51:12, 54:54). The deep circles under his eyes and the paleness of his skin create an unhealthy sleeplessness to Stefan's clearly mentally disturbed character, which may be due to nightmares that include remembering Maleficent's screams (55:45). Haunted by her, he continues the harsh treatment of his subjects by ordering the ironworkers to create weapons and fortify the castle further (40:12, 55:55). Thus, the more he embeds himself within the inner rooms of the castle, the more corrupt and cruel he becomes. The rooms Stefan occupies are often dark to reflect his moral character, needing additional light that creates an eerie ambiance. These rooms also seem dusty and neglected, which mirror his physical decline. For instance, the rooms are dark or the scenes take place at night when he asks for the ironworkers, talks to Maleficent's wings, and fights with her—all moments of anger, fear, and/or cruelty toward Maleficent.[15] Even when he meets his daughter, Aurora, for the first time as a young adult, he does not spend time talking to her or comforting her. Although Stefan's intentions may be to save Aurora from the curse, he does not respond to her hug when he first sees her or reassure her through words now that she knows about the curse and is meeting her father (1:05:47). Instead, after complimenting her, "you look just like your mother," he locks her in a room as he continues to plan for a fight with Maleficent (1:06:10, 1:06:42). This immediate isolation or segregation of women only adds to the emphasis of patriarchal control within the castle space. This becomes further emphasized since King

[15] Maleficent is also shown lurking in the darkness of the woods (48:42), but Aurora, who wishes to have a relationship with her, coaxes Maleficent into the light literally and figuratively; therefore, Maleficent does not experience this same fate.

Stefan's wife remains primarily voiceless and absent in the film—she is even dead by the time Aurora rejoins her father. In addition, the servants who are all women—men appear as soldiers and workers—are only shown twice and in a separate area of the castle.[16] Such disparity further illustrates the emphasis on masculinity within the castle space as well as the effort to make women inferior or invisible. Furthermore, rather than focusing on Aurora's protection in the final fight scene, Stefan blames the pixies for not protecting her as he and his soldiers focus on Maleficent's destruction.

When Maleficent later enters the castle to save Aurora, she must deal with these personal and structural changes. Specifically, she has to maneuver around the iron formations within the corridors, defeat the soldiers and their iron implements in the open hall, and eliminate the patriarchal threat of King Stefan. These formations look like thorns (1:11:28), showcasing the connection between her behavior in defending the Moors with a thorn wall and Stefan's cruel efforts to defend against her. Although she does not plan on killing him, he continues to be unwilling to let her go or create a peace between them. During their fight King Stefan asks, "How does it feel to be a fairy creature without wings in a world where you don't belong?" (1:22:08). Not only was his human kingdom not hospitable for her and the creatures of the Moors before, but he has also made the castle even more directly dangerous since. The increase in iron, man-made products, chosen specifically because the metal causes physical pain and harm to the fairies, becomes one such example. The use of an

---

[16] Aurora, locked in, finds a servant's entrance in order to escape the room (1:07:30). The servants are shown once, reacting to the news of a baby (26:03) and again when Aurora returns to the castle and ventures into the servant's area (1:07:14, 1:08:15). Isolation and silenced voices have been specifically researched by numerous scholars in relation to folk and fairy tales, including Ruth Bottigheimer's chapter in *Fairy tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm* (Philadeplphia: Pennsylvania UP, 1986 115-131) and Vera Sonja Maass's *The Cinderella Test: Would You Really Want the Shoe to Fit?* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2009 41-59).

iron net (1:18:31), shields (1:20:16, 1:21:52), and chain (1:21:11) during their fight seems designed by King Stefan to draw out his battle with Maleficent, although she receives the advantage once she regains the use of her wings (1:22:45-1:22:50). She proved herself a threat, however, his offensive rather than defensive attacks against the Moors and his physical violation of her has shown he has no interest in anything other than violent retribution. Thus, not only is he, as a King, a harmful representative of the patriarchal sphere of the castle, but the space itself, controlled by him, remains dangerous for these female characters.

Nature as Feminine, Private Sphere

The link between women and nature has been studied critically by ecofeminists for many years, with prominent scholars such as Mary Daly in *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon, 1978) and Susan Griffin in *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978) striving to reaffirm the value of the female-nature connection. The term "ecofeminism" is largely attributed to Françoise d'Eaubonne from *Le Féminisme ou la mort* (Paris: P. Horay, 1974) and has since been used by others to categorize authors like Rachel Carson in *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), who, among others, have helped to pioneer the ideas that now fall under this term. Greta Gaard and Patrick D. Murphy's explanation of ecofeminism within *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (Urbana: Illinois UP, 1998), as previously defined, connects to the importance of the movement as a vehicle for social change that continues today.

While endeavoring to understand the complicated relationship between women and nature, ecofeminists continue to scrutinize, among other items, the "traditional" binaries

between male/female, culture/nature, and reason/emotion that segregate women from certain regions and power. Plumwood specifically describes this problematic separation: "In patriarchal thought, men represent reason and rightfully control the world as well as the dangerous emotionality, irrationality and reproductivity of women, who are 'closer to nature'" (*Environmental Culture* 21). Yet, despite patriarchy's problematic justification, nature can be an empowering space for women before the challenge to these dichotomies within the masculine, public sphere takes place. Nature's feminine environment can therefore be depicted in opposition or as a resistance to the masculine-cultural location. Although some argue such a female-nature connection can be negative, this link leads to matriarchal political power and bonds between women within *Frozen* and *Maleficent*.[17] The cultural ecofeminist focus on valuing "traditional" qualities of women, including the association with nature, also contributes to a desire to transform this connection, seen in works by authors such as Stacy Alaimo and Plumwood. Characteristics of nature and women often include passivity, warmth, and fertility, which can be empowering based on choices that are part of an individual's personality but can also be damaging if used to stereotype or assume how a person should or should not act. Thus, how society should re-envision this relationship has led to many diverse viewpoints. For example, social ecofeminists, like Carolyn Merchant in *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980), analyze the intersections of patriarchy, imperialism, and capitalism,

[17] Some feminists, such as Simone de Beauvoir, are known for viewing the connection between women and nature as problematic because such a comparison reinforces the link to women's bodies (viewed as draining and alienating) along with the separation from culture, reducing women to being an "Other" (*The Second Sex* 19-29, 213; Tongs *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* 180-83).

connecting to Marxist and materialist feminism.[18] As Gaard and Murphy also state, ecofeminism "is . . . based on the recognition that these . . . forms of domination are bound up with class exploitation, racism, colonialism, and neocolonialism" (3). Because these cultural and social ecofeminisms complement one another, including the shared belief that such dualisms can threaten women and nature, elements of both will be used alongside analyses of gendered spaces and official/vernacular landscapes.

As mentioned previously, masculine spaces are associated with the public sphere or official landscape, while feminine spaces are associated with the private sphere or vernacular landscape—resulting in a "process of othering" on the female side of this dichotomy (Plumwood *Environmental Culture* 4, 17). Susan Gal, in *Going Public* (Urbana: Illinois UP, 2004), explains how these dichotomies are "used to characterize, categorize, organize, and contrast virtually any kind of social fact: spaces, institutions, bodies, groups, activities, interactions, relations" (264). These categorizations often lead to harm but should not lead to exclusion or fear of connections such as women and nature because, as shown in the following section, nature provides a beneficial setting for the women in *Frozen* and *Maleficent*. Yet, merely celebrating the constructive side of this association is not enough. Leonore Davidoff, in *Feminism, the Public/Private* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998) notes how these dichotomies were also criticized by feminists, who instead emphasize "multiplicity, plurality, and the blurring of boundaries" (165). Therefore, the following sections explore the positivity of women in nature leading to familial bonding that assists in the blurring of these borders while also acknowledging the problematic elements of continuing the use of these binaries.

---

[18] For more information regarding the branches of ecofeminism, consult Gaard and Murphy's *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism* (Urbana: Illinois UP, 1998) or articles such as "Socialist and Cultural Ecofeminism: Allies in Resistance" by Elizabeth Carlassare (89-106).

Disney princesses have maintained a connection with nature since *Snow White*, but previously their abilities did not extend much beyond communicating with animal-helpers.[19] Elsa and Maleficent, however, are active Queen figures who possess nature-based power. Along with having their magical abilities originate and become strengthened within nature, there they also form and continue familial bonds that empower them to utilize their political power in both masculine and feminine spaces. Tracey Mollet describes the use of *Snow White* as a cultural mirror for America during the film's creation as well as the establishment of a Disney Princess who "always dreams of some relief from her current setting . . . . [and] can always sing of her fears, hopes, and dreams" (122). *Frozen* and *Maleficent*'s inclusion of more empowering feminist elements, such as magical and political power and familial bonding, furthers the idea of Disney films as an imperfect cultural mirror, reflecting the increased power and presence of women in contemporary society. Alongside these elements, *Frozen* and *Maleficent* continue the portrayal of women who reflect on (in the case of *Frozen* through musical elements) and attempt to better their lives within natural spaces.

Portrayals of masculinity within nature impact the lives of women associated with this space and provide a contrast for how characters like Elsa act within the feminine, environmental landscape. *Frozen* begins with a depiction of the masculine-nature space, as men work to cut and transport ice in a display of patriarchal power. Throughout the song "Frozen Heart," the men repeat the choices to "strike" and "break," while using their bodies

---

[19] Snow White, Cinderella, and Aurora are all known for singing and interacting with birds and other animals that help them with tasks. Princesses like Jasmine, Pocahontas, Rapunzel, and Merida continue this legacy by having friendship relationships with one or two animals in particular. Ariel and Mulan also have close relationships but are able to converse back and forth with their animal-helper(s). Belle and Tiana also follow this legacy but in more unique ways. Belle interacts with the staff within the castle, portrayed as household items, and falls in love with the Beast—an animal who turns back into a man. Tiana is a human female who turns into a frog and interacts with her romantic interest—a frog who is also a human male.

and sharp tools to saw, hook, and carry away the ice from its natural habitat toward civilization (2:12, 2:21). Their unified male voices describe how the "icy force both foul and fair has a frozen heart worth mining," as their feats of strength and force over nature display the patriarchal desire to exploit what they value from the land (2:00). The powerful quality of ice also represents the danger of the cold environment these men fear—"beware the frozen heart"—and fight against (3:05). This leads to the desire for mastery over these natural resources, which Heidi Hansson further clarifies with her statement: "It has become more or less a truism in ecofeminist criticism . . . that the relationship between human beings and nature is a matter of a mastery, paralleled by men's control of women in a patriarchal world" (59). Mastery not only connects back to the imperialist notions of control over something or someone but also implies a superior type of skill. In direct contrast to the ecocritical view of caring for the natural world, these mastery skills imply using nature for humanity's gain, a problematic, anthropocentric focus. The ecofeminist paralleling of the oppression of nature and women also implies the patriarchal "skills" that take advantage of nature then also transfer to masculine control and authority over women within nature and culture spaces. Many cultural studies and ecofeminist theorists have exposed, like Hansson, this correlation between the feminization of nature and patriarchal imperialism, putting the health and safety of nature and women at risk (60). Thus, as Elsa is represented by ice, the male chorus's desire to utilize ice as a resource and the apparent fear of its uncontrollable strength (although they are unaware she has magic and will accidentally freeze Anna's heart) indirectly supports harmful male reactions to her and her nature-based power. These established masculine ideas within Arendelle's community, perpetuated through these workers, are shared by members of other communities, like the Duke, as well. His fear of

Elsa's personal power and willingness to exploit the weaknesses of her political authority takes the desire to utilize natural resources to a personal level. In fact, the Duke of Wesleton's reaction, among others, is what leads Elsa to flee the patriarchal castle sphere for the freedom of a feminine nature-space, the North Mountain.

Although patriarchal forces within masculine, castle spaces as well as within nature regions are potentially dangerous, nature landscapes are also beneficial for women, allowing Elsa to explore her personal identity. In fact, only when Elsa becomes truly alone does she begin the song, "Let it Go," her happiness growing when the unattainable idea of "that perfect girl is gone," and she can now "let the storm rage on" (34:22, 32:30). Acknowledging the "kingdom of isolation" she has become queen of, she releases her weighty cape as well as her remaining glove, representing the loosening of the confinement and concealment of her powers (31:30). These initial steps away from her father's teachings represent her first movements toward personal exploration and freedom. Alaimo states that many women look for such an undomesticated nature, a place "that . . . is untamed and thus serves as a model for female insurgency," where women can be wild rather than obedient (16). This liberating feature of nature Elsa currently appears to be enjoying contrasts with the controlling quality of the cultural sphere. Now that her magical power no longer endures as a burdensome secret, she can enjoy the relief of "now they know," and she can "let it go" (32:05, 32:08). Having escaped the oppression of the castle and no longer needing to worry about secrets or harming others, Elsa instead explores the fun, freeing quality of her powers.

Elsa's increasing confidence also leads to an exploration of sensuality. As C. Richard King, Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo, and Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo, note, "recent animated films . . . seem to portray more nuanced femininities (and gender roles generally) . . . [that] offers

more agency" within its portrayal of female characters (95). However, while they note the presence of assertive and sexualized characters, having the opportunity to be sexy rather than being sexualized would provide increased empowerment. Elsa seems to display this sexiness as she finishes "Let It Go" with a side-to-side swagger that, along with what look like high heels, accentuates the form of her hips (34:24). Like other Disney princesses, she has an unrealistic body type to begin with, but it appears that now she is free to be herself rather than focus on her professional duties, she wishes to explore the "undomesticated" side of herself that Alaimo describes. Elsa also lets her hair down from a bun to a braid before creating a new, more form-fitting dress (reflecting the blue and white ethereal quality of snow and ice) with a high slit to reveal her legs (34:11). Yet, alone within her matriarchal space, Elsa creates her own world and actively works to express herself rather than being defined by others, which could include her healthy and potentially empowering sexuality (without the need of a heterosexual romance).

Although nature appears to be the only place for Elsa's newfound freedom, merely escaping the patriarchal space does not establish nature as a beneficial, feminine landscape. Barbara J. Cook responds to confining representations of women in nature and the private sphere by emphasizing the helpful qualities of the female-nature connection, including the idea of "nature as an agent of resistance" (1-3). While describing a sphere as private seems to only encompass small, interior spaces, the large outdoor location of the North Mountain remains solely occupied by Elsa. Her landscape, defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "an area of countryside or land," difficult to access since the area appears high on a mountainside, places her on the edge of or even isolated from the cultural landscape. This "naturescape" therefore does not have the cultural or public sphere's link with political

power like her previous castle home, making the landscape more of a private home. Yet, Elsa has the power to resist the patriarchal desire to control nature (and herself) while maintaining the conviction to claim her own feminine space. By forming her own castle, known as a space of political power, with her personal magic in this private, nature location, Elsa establishes herself as a matriarch within the landscape—resisting the notion that only the masculine, public sphere has the potential for political authority. Even though she does not have the political power to influence others when isolated, she does have the personal capability to utilize the natural elements within this location; and with her creation of the ice castle, she seems to establish a matriarchal region similar to the cultural, political arena of her castle home, even without the ability to sway others—foreshadowing the potential for both types of power to be wielded in the same landscape. Thus, Elsa embodies the ecofeminist idea that both nature and women are oppressed, but that the connection between women and nature can also be a way to strengthen and empower. Choosing to resist her previous confinement then opens the potential for her character to transfer her personal and political power beyond the solitary matriarchal space to the public sphere in order to rule her kingdom and end the oppression of both.[20]

Elsa's utilization of her nature-based power within this matriarchal landscape thereby contrasts with the masculine use of nature in establishing an ecofeminist space—a necessary distinction for a nature connection to truly benefit women. While some may argue that Elsa strives to merely control her ability and the natural world around her, she appears to instead work to utilize her ability as part of the responsibility and love for her sister and kingdom rather than mirror the patriarchal exploitation of nature. As Janis Birkeland emphasizes, "The

[20] A matriarchy describes political power that is passed down to female heirs. Although her father was the King before her in Arendelle and there is no clear inclination how political power would pass here, she establishes herself as the sole power-yielding figure in this landscape.

very essence of ecofeminism is its challenge to the presumed necessity of power relationships. It is about changing from a morality based on 'power over' to one based on reciprocity and responsibility ('power to')," challenging patriarchy in the process (19).[21] Thus, how Elsa uses her personal power within nature remains as important in establishing ecofeminist qualities as her presence in the space itself. Her choice to work within nature as a fellow creator of the landscape displays a respect for nature as well as a direct challenge to the patriarchal response within this space. Nevertheless, she does subvert the landscape's agency when she changes its space based on her desires, creating her own "culture" within nature. Such a blending foreshadows the hybrid location she will create later when she brings nature, through her powers, to the castle.

Yet, even with these ecofeminist features, Elsa's female-nature connection with negative personifications of northern landscapes has the potential to create a problematic, antagonistic persona. While being associated with and working within nature through her personal power becomes an area of strength for Elsa, being confined solely to nature would be detrimental. By connecting concepts of gender and place, Hansson analyzes how expectations and preconceived notions impact people's ideas of gendered places, resulting in the generation of dangerous female, nature personifications of Northern or Arctic regions like the Ice Queen (59). Elsa's creation of snow and ice, depicted in direct opposition to Anna's association with warmth, connects to similar winter weather patterns and directly roots to the landscape of the North Mountain. This deadly environment could lead to the creation of a threatening character, resulting in an antagonistic relationship between Elsa and Anna.

---

[21] Maleficent appears to struggle with this more than Elsa. Despite growing up within a kingdom that seems to be founded on trust and reciprocity, Maleficent struggles with letting go of this patriarchal power (as demonstrated through her relationship with Diaval) and only when she changes how she utilizes this power is she able to change back to her former persona (shown through the transformation of her power and physical self along with her relationship with Aurora).

Sheldon Cashdan points out that this typical type of evil character becomes "easily identified by the lethal threat she poses" (17). Some may therefore debate Elsa's dangerousness, including the peril Hansson describes: "one who is taken in by the illusion [of warmth, light, or kindness] and captured by the chilly North is frozen in every respect – emotionally as well as physically – and loses his or her will to escape and in extreme cases, even the will to live" (63). Even when her idea of loving Anna involves pushing her away, Elsa never tries to capture or emotionally freeze her sister; yet, Elsa's unintentional backlash does physically freeze Anna's heart, showing that despite the protective relationship dynamic Elsa has with her, Elsa still has the potential to endanger Anna and their kingdom.

Rather than being a solely negative force, however, Elsa contains qualities of cold and warm nature embodiments, creating a unique blend of antagonist and protagonist characteristics. Well-known Disney nature representations, like Grandmother Willow in *Pocahontas*, are Mother Earth figures with maternal, nurturing qualities similar to a fairy godmother, known for giving advice. Powerful northern landscape personifications, as Naomi Wood argues, challenge this idea of warm and fertile Mother Earth descriptions through contrasting cold, sky images (199). However, despite the fact that snow and ice elements used by northern personifications are usually linked with concepts of death and sterility, Elsa proves her ability for giving life by making snow and ice creations (Hansson 67). In doing so, Elsa connects to the nurturing, maternal quality Annette Kolodny describes through the "birthing" of a castle and Olaf, along with her continued efforts to protect Anna (4-9). Elsa also creates the Golem-like being, named Marshmallow (preventing the creature from being taken wholly seriously), with the intention to defend against intruders and scare Kristoff and Anna away rather than to physically harm them—although he does attack when

Anna provokes him (58:17). In fact, only when patriarchal forces invade her castle, such as the Duke's men and Hans, does Elsa intentionally (in fearful self-defense) lash out with ice (1:10:38). Even the winter Elsa created in Arendelle when she froze the fjord, enabling her escape, was not a conscious act to hurt others, and the act of running away, despite her sense of duty, shows Elsa does not intend to be an antagonist. Rather than becoming another Snow Queen-type villain due to her dangerous personal power, Elsa's intentions as well as actions ultimately establish her as a fellow protagonist who utilizes nature in an ecofeminist manner.

Of the two gendered landscapes portrayed in *Maleficent*, the Moors represents the "traditional" feminine, nature space. As I discussed and cited, the film begins with a narrator introducing audiences to the history and situation of both kingdoms. It is worth quoting here an additional passage from this opening sequence: "In the other kingdom, the Moors, lived every manner of strange and wonderful creatures and they needed neither King nor Queen but trusted in one another" (1:05).[22] Positive characteristics such as trust, kindness and reciprocity are attributed to the creatures of the Moors throughout the film, whereas the human kingdom remains connected to patriarchal rule and described in opposing terms like "discontent" and "envious" (1:01). These negative qualities then place the blame for the "worst of neighbors" situation on the aggressive human kingdom, while images of the Moors are full of vibrant colors within nature locations and trusting interactions with one another (0:42). For example, the creatures immediately come and interact with Aurora when they meet her and are never shown disagreeing with Maleficent's decisions, although they later show fear and disappointment (48:00, 52:34). In fact, the Moors take an interest in seeing

[22] The human territory, as previously analyzed, is described as being "like you and me," establishing a similarity with the audience, whereas the fictional space and creatures of the Moors are described as Other (0:55).

Aurora after her first visit, perhaps noticing the change Aurora creates in her (50: 35). These egalitarian qualities are productive, but Disney is also known for its portrayal of passivity, associated with domesticity and women, which connects specific feminine stereotypes of life to the Moors that makes the area and the creatures within potentially more vulnerable. As such, the beings within this landscape experience real danger and violence. Over the years, Disney has established a pattern of showcasing and supporting nature, albeit in human-centric, problematic ways (Booker 173). For example, none of the creatures within the Moors take on the typical talking or interactive animal-helper role (they are instead cared for by Maleficent, who can communicate with the humans), but the anthropomorphic portrayal of these beings and the clear veneration of them over the human kingdom display this conventional depiction of nature. In addition, the domesticated animals associated with the human realm (like horses), are not given this same sense of life and death, thus seeming to establish a separation of animal and human (insignificant and significant life) that does not appear to be present for the Moors.

Physical landscapes (nature's association with women and vice versa) and social constructions play a role in perpetuating gender within the film, associating these creatures of the Moors—including Maleficent—with femininity. When first shown in the film "in a great tree on a great cliff in the Moors," she stops playing with what appear to be a boy and girl doll dancing together (foreshadowing an interest in romance) and heals a broken tree branch with her magical power (1:20, 1:84). Despite being a young child, she has empathy for the nature life around her, and by watching over the lives of the trees and other beings, she fulfills a maternal, nurturing role within this nature space. As the narrator introduces her as Maleficent, she spreads her great wings and flies around the Moors, acknowledging the

"strange and wonderful creatures" around her by name (1:10, 2:19). This comfort and joy within her home remains present as an adult, as Maleficent soars above the clouds to face the sun, spreading her strong and beautiful wings to feel the warmth and breeze. (9:09, 1:28:29). These moments of freedom depict her as a powerful character, but her leadership duty also includes staying primarily within her home or domestic space.

Serving as the kingdom's protector, Maleficent watches over the Moors to defend its feminine, nature landscape from the castle's patriarchal forces. When she first meets Stefan, a young human boy, she welcomes the friendship (and later romance) rather than being suspicious or fighting him, despite the past violence and fear between their kingdoms. Nevertheless, she fights when she must, as she becomes forced to when King Henry comes to attack the Moors. While she fights with her wings, flying up and down and knocking soldiers down with force or the wind from her wings, large and powerful creatures come forth from the woods to help, making the human soldiers seem small, helpless, and easily defeated. Thus proving her description as "the strongest of the fairies," Maleficent's active, fighter role connects to heroism (commonly associated with masculinity), while her empathy and nurturing also relates to a protective, maternal femininity (8:22). Her ability to combine both commonly attributed masculine and feminine characteristics thus shows a more contemporary concept of what a hero/heroine can be within a Disney Princess film. No evidence exists that this heroic, matriarchal role were passed down by her mother or another female political figure, yet her obvious ruling position and eventual passing of that political power to her goddaughter, Aurora, solidifies her as a matriarch. However she was appointed, Maleficent was given a position that Pierre Bourdieu describes as rare: "While it is true that women are found at all levels of the social space, their chances of access (and rate of

representation) decline as one moves towards the . . . most sought-after positions ” (91). Her role includes authority over her people, functioning both as a defender and domestic carer of others; however, despite her top position among the Moors, Bourdieu also notes that “a woman cannot have authority over men”—a masculine value that explains the patriarchal kingdom’s reaction to her role (94).

Nature, along with women and other life forms in the vernacular landscape, remains undervalued and exploited by the masculine public sphere.[23] The Moors and its occupants are belittled partly because they choose not to use political terms, like queen, commonly associated with the masculine, official landscape. While this could establish their kingdom as a private sphere, their space also includes the wildness or undomesticated quality of nature. Joni Adamson emphasizes the vernacular as a home that is “alive” (90). The Moors represent such a home with an abundance of plant and animal life within an outdoor location, thus associating their kingdom with nature and this definition of vernacular landscape. Along with being connected to an abundance of life forms, they have their own set of values. For instance, when the young Stefan gives back a jewel he stole from the Moors, he does not understand why Maleficent would “throw it away,” but she explains that by dropping the jewel in the river she “delivered it home” (5:25). Maleficent communicates with various creatures and shows the same level of respect for the jewel, a lesson she tries to teach Stefan. As the Moors and the life within this physical space are linked, Stefan thus steals from both. The valuing of home and belonging for all entities over wealth or ownership represents culture, but the splitting of these kingdoms into dualistic, gendered spaces maintains a separation between official and vernacular landscapes. Thus, the culture that exists within the

[23] On this matter, see Sherry B. Ortner’s article “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” in *Feminism, the Public and the Private* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

vernacular, nature space of the Moors remains segregated and not as valuable to the official, human kingdom. Yet, the nature landscape is where personal growth and bonds between women are made.

Disney counters Maleficent's conventional darkness, as previously described, by allowing her to slowly develop a familial, loving bond with Aurora within the feminine, nature space. After cursing her, Maleficent secretly follows Aurora and her three guardians (Flittle, Knotgrass, and Thistletwit), calling the infant ugly and trying to scare her while saying: "I hate you beastie" (35:44, 35:52-35:56). Yet, between her and Diaval, they actually care for the child and are more aware of her needs than her incompetent guardians. For example, Diaval brings a flower for baby Aurora to drink from and rocks her to sleep (37:06, 37:12). Maleficent continues to be present during this process as well—eagerly playing tricks on the three pixies to distract and frustrate them, but growing vines to catch Aurora before she falls from a cliff (38:23, 41:14). Saving her life does not mean Maleficent is ready to form a bond with Aurora though. In fact, when Aurora, now a toddler, sees Maleficent healing a tree in the woods (41:39) and is picked up and allowed to touch her horns (42:17), Maleficent does so reluctantly—resolutely claiming, "I don't like children" (42:04). However, she continues to watch over Aurora and notices her developing curiosity as she grows into a teenager, eventually trusting Aurora enough to take her into the Moors. This connection between women through the exploration of the feminine, nature space provides both women with a safe sphere to discover their personal identities and relationship with one another. In particular, Aurora gains an understanding of Maleficent as she becomes initiated into the Moors—learning about Maleficent's childhood home, and as Maleficent becomes more comfortable with Aurora in this landscape, more about Maleficent herself as well.

Aurora also trusts her because she believes Maleficent to be her fairy godmother, an older female figure known for bonding with and guiding young women. As in Disney's *Cinderella*, a fairy godmother can be associated with the transformation of beauty, but they are most commonly more substantial grandmother or mother guides. Aurora's pronouncement occurs prematurely (49:44), but Maleficent is a fairy who takes on mothering or parenting tasks (although Aurora is a human and not her biological daughter). For example, Maleficent puts Aurora under a spell to take her into the Moors, but she also tucks her in bed afterward, expressing "good night, beastie" in a soft, soothing tone (51:00).[24] In addition to these seeming regular occurrences, she becomes Aurora's protector, such as when she saves Aurora from falling off of a cliff. Maleficent also gives her advice as she gets older, thereby fulfilling the fairy godmother role of guidance (57:25). Even if Aurora does not remember all of these moments, she clearly recognizes the developing affection Maleficent has for her. Aurora's trust therefore begins with the assumption of an established familial bond, but further develops and strengthens based on Maleficent's specific actions and feelings. Expressing to Maleficent that the Moors are "everything I imagined it would be," Aurora projects her delight in spending time with her and being introduced to Diaval in his human form (50:07). This leads to her desire to live with Maleficent: "We can look after each other . . . . and all of the fair people will be my friends. I'll be happy here for the rest of my life" (57:57). Beyond a childish curiosity for the Moors' nature landscape, Aurora displays a loving interest in being a part of such a space and Maleficent's life, a connection she attaches to her own life-long happiness. Maleficent's growing interest in a familial bond

[24] Maleficent admires Aurora's curiosity (43:55) but initially chooses to put Aurora into a spell to transport her into the Moors (46:54), which displays a potential reluctance to share her space and power with Aurora. Aurora's energy seems to confuse or overwhelm Maleficent at first (50:12), yet Maleficent also shows her kindness when taking her back home (51:00). Therefore, Maleficent must share her power and let go of her fear in order to bond with Aurora, which leads to emotional and physical healing.

thereby becomes reciprocated through Aurora's love and their time together within the Moors.

It is important to note these experiences take place within nature, as if the feminine space provides an opportunity for female bonding not present for these characters in Disney's *Sleeping Beauty*. Spending time together in the Moors develops their growing love for one another and even causes Maleficent to smile again. As creatures she used to play with as a child start a mud-throwing game and are joined by Aurora, Maleficent and Diaval watch. When one creature accidentally hits Maleficent, they are afraid, but Diaval's guffaw goads her into throwing mud on him in response, which makes her smile and the others laugh (52:58, 53:05). This simple moment of fun and happiness within her nature-based home seems to empower Maleficent to remember who she used to be and leads to her attempt to revoke the curse from Aurora, an act of true love (54:30). Although her magic reverts back to its original yellow color, she cannot counteract the green magic she evoked in the castle; however, this does not show Maleficent turns out to be weaker in nature or as a better version of herself, but instead proves how difficult change and undoing the harm done to one another can be. The emotional pain of her failure lingers clearly on her face, but Maleficent continues to return to her former self as she spends time in the Moors with Aurora—her magic remaining yellow as a sign of physical healing. Specifically, Maleficent's magic projects as yellow when connecting with nature (as with the staff) or happy emotions (interacting with Aurora) and only becomes green based on her anger and fear (seen in her eyes as well at 1:24:48). Away from the place where her attack happened, castle spaces, and where she must confront soldiers from the human kingdom, she uses her magic in fun and beneficial ways (although still used in problematic ways against Diaval) and even talks to Aurora about her

wings: “They were strong. They never faltered. I could trust them” (55:10). When Aurora asks about Maleficent’s wings, Maleficent, sad but still strengthened by their relationship, answers and even allows Aurora to touch her (55:03, 55:25). Although still hurt and missing that part of herself, the ability to talk about this pain and focus on her love for Aurora rather than her past vengeance indicates partial healing—an emotional empowerment vital to survivors that only becomes possible through a place of safety and support.

Maleficent’s strength, stemming from her bond with Aurora, helps her to heal personally and also leads to the matriarchal empowerment that heals her kingdom. Hoping she can keep Aurora safe in the Moors, Maleficent allows her to come live there with her; however, the truth of the curse becomes revealed before this can happen. Hurt to discover her curse and that Maleficent, who confesses her role, represents “the evil that’s in the world,” Aurora runs away to the castle (1:04:52). Driven initially by love and a desire to repair their bond, Maleficent leaves the safety of her nature home and goes to rescue Aurora. As their relationship and her personal growth extends into the public sphere, Maleficent (perhaps driven by guilt for the harm she caused Aurora and her people through the curse and subsequent changes) seems to know that peace rather than continued conflict is vital. Explored more extensively in the second chapter, Maleficent faces King Stefan and the soldiers of the human kingdom but focuses on establishing a matriarchy through Aurora to ensure peace between the realms. Thus, the development of Maleficent and Aurora’s familial love works to create a lasting empowerment for women as individuals (like Maleficent) and a peace that restores the strength of the nature-based kingdom of the Moors.

Maleficent’s ability to move beyond her mirroring of patriarchal power to focus on her own healing and loving relationship with Aurora within nature demonstrates Disney’s

focus on empowering character qualities and familial bonding. But, as with *Frozen*, despite the personal growth characters achieve in nature spaces, their development and the subsequent relationships must not only exist within private landscapes. For a more productive "happily ever after," Maleficent must use her personal and political power along with her familial bond with Aurora to desegregate gendered spaces—creating a beneficial change for both individuals and kingdoms. Disney's additional choice to give Elsa a blend of qualities from conventional northern landscape and Mother Earth personifications uniquely blurs antagonist and protagonist qualities, focusing on Elsa's empowering connection to nature and her and Anna's sisterly love. Although complicated by Elsa's fear, their familial relationship overcomes potential rivalry and remains the emphasis over Anna's potential romantic interests. Yet, utilizing ecofeminist power dynamics within the nature landscape and maintaining familial bonds are only the first steps in achieving success for Elsa and Anna, which will be explored further in the second chapter.

CHAPTER 2

FEMALE BONDING DESGREGATES SPACES

The first chapter analyzed the gendered spaces of castles (public, masculine) and nature landscapes (private, feminine) within *Frozen* and *Maleficent* and the impact they have on Elsa and Maleficent's public and personal power. The second chapter examines the progression of these characters as they apply their female-nature connection to strengthen their familial bond, utilizing political and personal power within matriarchal and patriarchal spaces. By emphasizing beneficial female relationships, both films parody conventional heterosexual roles and romance—interpreting "true love's kiss" as familial love. This bond continues from the private sphere to the public, assisted by male allies. Their masculine presence, rather than resulting in heterosexual marriage, leads to an increased gender flexibility or balance and supports successful "happily ever after" endings for the female characters.

Before moving on to the analysis, I would like to make a short digression because I believe an explanation of my choice of terminology is necessary to my discussion. Disney films do not represent the broad implications or societal realities of private and public spheres, their boundaries and lack thereof, or the third spaces some scholars focus on. Therefore, I will not use different terms used to describe spaces with public and private elements within society, such as Ellen Rooney's "semiprivate room" (333), Mary Ann Tètreault's "meta-space" (29), or Susan Gal's "fractal distinctions" (264), all of which shift the interpretation of spheres beyond the established dichotomy. Additionally, desegregation, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, refers to ending a racial segregation policy. Gender separation can be a form of discrimination like racial isolation but has not always

occurred in the same way or at the same level as one another in American history. Despite these differing layers, I use this term to refer to the dichotomous structural barriers in place that put women at a disadvantage (which can occur doubly so for women of color). In previous Disney films, areas were not merged merely because of a Princess's literal or metaphorical transformation. For instance, the gendering of locations was not challenged by Ariel turning from a mermaid into a human or from Cinderella's class mobility through marriage. However, I posit that spatial desegregation does occur within *Frozen* and *Maleficent*. Such desegregation becomes evident through an improvement in balance or social change, such as power being wielded in both masculine and feminine regions that thereby dissolves barriers of access and/or prevents harm.

Frozen establishes Anna and Elsa's sisterly bond and *Maleficent* forms Aurora and Maleficent's mother-daughter relationship to overcome spatial and romantic obstacles, including confining patriarchal influences. The films also utilize Elsa and Maleficent's female-nature connection and political power to unify gendered spaces. What I term as desegregated spheres relates to the breaking down of barriers within landscapes, which are socially constructed, resulting in a more gender equitable environment. Rather than creating a new area or a unique way of interpreting public and private spaces—which would reflect the realistic complications of political and social realities instead of the simplified regions (designed primarily for children) in these films—I focus on terms such as desegregating, blending, merging or the unifying of gendered landscapes that result in a broader interpretation of a "happily ever after" ending for the female characters within these films. "Happily ever after" previously meant defeating the villain and establishing a heterosexual, romantic relationship; however, I posit such an ending can occur by defeating the antagonist

(or having the antagonist become a protagonist) and growing as an individual. Growth could be physical, mental, emotional, and/or social, expanding this development beyond the individual to constructively affect additional characters. Romance may be an option for happiness, but having choices and therefore multiple avenues for empowerment can occur through many types of relationships and experiences, so romantic love does not need to be a necessary component. Happiness instead becomes dependent on a character's or characters' overall success or "happily ever after" within these Disney films, which serves to empower the female characters and their kingdoms.

Disney's choice to allow Elsa to remain single creates a move toward an independent and fulfilled female character and enacts a more extensive exploration into the relationship between her and her sister. Anna saves Elsa's life and turns out to be the key to Elsa's successful use of nature-based power within the public sphere, which alongside the use of political power, serves to desegregate these spaces. Similarly, *Maleficent* focuses on the development of Maleficent as an empowered protagonist (without a heterosexual romance emphasis) and her familial bond with Aurora. The nature space of the Moors provides the opportunity for their mother-daughter or matrifocal relationship, which leads to Maleficent's use of political power to crown Aurora as Queen of the Moors and the human kingdom, unifying these gendered realms.

The merging of these places also becomes more effective or complete due to the gender fluidity of characters like Maleficent and the inclusion of allies, such as Kristoff and Diaval, who display a masculinity that reflects third-wave feminist ideals. Third-wave feminism, as coined by Rebecca Walker in "Becoming the Third Wave,"[25] strives to forge

---

[25] Rebecca Walker, considered by many to be the first to coin the term "Third Wave", resolutely states: "I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave" (41). Jennifer Baumgardner, in *F'em! Goo Goo, Gaga, and*

gender equity and equality—goals that male allies can also represent and aid. In *Frozen*, Kristoff displays his own skills within gendered spaces alongside his respect and assistance of both sisters in public and private spheres. This support and presence as an ecofeminist male figure in nature also helps create steps toward gender and nature balance. Although a complete balance between nature and culture and genders is not achieved, a pattern of helpful male protagonists alongside empowered female protagonists within increasingly blended spaces (nature/private/feminine, culture/public/masculine) is established. In *Maleficent*, Maleficent's association with Diaval starts off as patriarchal and harmful, yet grows into a friendship or a nonromantic, co-parental bond. Diaval's interactions with Maleficent and familial relationship with Aurora influences Maleficent's own development and connection with her, which leads to the merging of the kingdoms. Active male characters, even minor ones, can therefore have a constructive impact on female relationships and the desegregation of gendered spaces.

Rivals No More: Female Bonding Fosters Empowerment

Frozen and *Maleficent* ultimately establish bonds over rivalries between Anna and Elsa and Aurora and Maleficent; however, creating antagonists through competition has previously been common between female characters. Along with a heavy presence in Young Adult Literature and film, scholars such as Phyllis Chesler in *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman* (New York: Nation Books, 2002) and Leora Tanenbaum in *Catfight: Women and*

Some Thoughts About Balls. (Berkeley: Seal P, 2011), recognizes that when feminists declare an aspect of feminism to be present that it should be accepted, including the Third and Fourth "waves" (251). Baumgardner also describes that being a Third Wave feminist (beginning in the late 1980's), includes living a feminist life (whether or not they claim to be feminists), supporting an intersectional perspective, critiquing sexism within dominant society, supporting women through popular culture, sex positivity, trans feminism, transparency and sharing, individually-driven and portable actions, and the inclusion of men's issues (248-50).

Competition (New York: Seven Stories P, 2002) have analyzed the presence of competition and aggression between women in society. Yet, the culturally constructed assumptions of feminine "sneaky" competition and masculine open confrontation as described by Tanenbaum do not take place within these films (21). Instead, Maleficent evokes an open, public curse and Elsa inadvertently harms Anna, turning their conflict or rivalry (if present at all) into familial bonds. While *Frozen* and *Maleficent* are not feminist films per se, the "sisterhood" or bonding element within them does represent a feminist quality. Therefore, while bell hooks' assertion is socially accurate—"we are taught that women are 'natural' enemies" and therefore bonding or solidarity between women remains discouraged (43)—the camaraderie between female characters within these films showcases loving relationships rather than the previously common rivalries. In the case of *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, such love and subsequent empowerment comes from familial attachments. According to Rebecca C. Hains, "Third-wavers define the word 'family' broadly, recognizing many configurations of adults and children as constituting families"—a definition that can fit both Elsa and Anna's biological sisterhood and Maleficent and Aurora's godmother and goddaughter connection (128). With this in mind, the female relationships within *Frozen* and *Maleficent* are third-wave, familial bonds that, while flawed, further develop the possibility of solidarity instead of rivalry.

Anna and Elsa's physical separation within Arendelle's castle seemed like the first step in reverting to established female depictions by increasing the sisters' conflict rather than their bond; however, while forced isolation in childhood and adult self-exile separated them, neither lead Elsa to become a villain. Nevertheless, sisterhood does not automatically mean a loving bond. Vera Sonja Maass states: "The idealization of 'sisterhood' promises

deep and meaningful bonding between women . . . . But in reality, sister-sister relationships are often negatively affected by primitive hostilities and competition" (119). While *Frozen*'s sisterly bond may be idealistic, in order to create rivalry or enemy roles, Elsa and Anna would have to strive for a goal they would not want to share (like a significant other) or become driven by a hatred for each other, neither of which form at any point in the film. Aurora and Maleficent's relationship, on the other hand, begins with a curse, following Maass's expectations: "Mother-daughter bonds, as well as general female interactions, are often characterized by a negative, competitive urge" (111). Just as Elsa has to avoid becoming a rival to Anna, Maleficent must work through her own experiences and feelings of violence toward Aurora in order to prioritize heroic, female, loving relationships over antagonistic competition. Ultimately, Stefan fulfills the antagonist or villain role as Maleficent's desire for hostility ceases and her love for Aurora develops into a familial attachment.

Female bonding and empowerment—made possible through nature locations—leads to the defeat of patriarchal obstacles and a merging of gendered places. This blending can only occur, however, if peace is present between kingdoms and public and private spaces are safe for women. To potentially promote such safety, the introduction of *On Violence: A Reader* (Durham: Duke UP, 2007) states: "we remain confident that [the] exposure [of violence] will help others to wrestle with its force and to find ways to transform its potential for destruction into options for growth, if not peace" (Lawrence and Karim 14). If folk and fairy tales continue to reflect contemporary life, then Disney must also continue to mirror the dismantling of patriarchy and other forms of violence as society moves toward gender equity and equality. As Lutz Rohrich states, "Fairy tales always reflect the society in which they are

told," often focusing on "the disruption of social structure" (5, 8). Such levels of success clearly have not yet appeared, but steps are being made through the minimizing of patriarchal forces and the blurring of gendered spaces within *Frozen* and *Maleficent*. Although incomplete forms of growth and peace, Disney makes strides with Elsa's wielding of political and personal power within the castle's public sphere and through Aurora's matriarchal position. Elsa's use of authority and Aurora's crowning—which also constitutes a legal peace treaty—merges gendered spaces together, creating changes (beyond what the films depict) that could continue to make all spaces safe and accessible to women.

Frozen's Anna and Elsa reunite within Elsa's ice castle as sisters who continue to love each other, but despite Anna's efforts, convincing Elsa to reconnect their sisterly bond proves challenging. Anna identifies Elsa's loving desire to protect her, singing "you don't have to protect me / I'm not afraid," while showing her love and interest in being a part of Elsa's life (55:42). Intended with equal affection, Elsa reminds Anna of the danger in being around her as well as the benefit of this isolation for Elsa: "I belong here, alone, where I can be who I am without hurting anybody" (54:47). Anna's stated faith in Elsa's ability to "unfreeze" the winter to save Arendelle does not seem to help Elsa see beyond her failure and fear, who lashes out and freezes Anna's heart without realizing the extent of her actions (57:00). While these events show that a reunion does not happen, they still do not use the language or intentions of enemies; thus, albeit seeming to establish a rivalry, one never fully forms.

Instead, Elsa and Anna are both established as protagonists, while their female bonding, despite conflicts and struggles, continues. Along with Elsa, Anna appears to receive

the most screen time and thus her own opportunity to develop as an individual character. They must both deal with male antagonists like Hans and the Duke, with Anna doing so while choosing to support Elsa and their sisterly bond. She takes responsibility for her part in Elsa's actions, defending her sister's accidental impact on the weather, and enlists Kristoff to help her navigate the weather and landscape. Anna struggles to venture into the female-nature gendered space as easily as Elsa, but uses her agency and determination to overcome conflicts and obstacles. She also negotiates for winter clothes, fights off wolves, and treks to the North Mountain, showing freedom and agency in her choice to continue despite being out of her element. In the masculine, public sphere, Anna could have become a passive sidekick to her fiancé Hans; however, by focusing on reuniting with her sister and stepping into the feminine, natural world, Anna learns she can depend on friends and herself. Thus, rather than concentrating solely on marriage or fulfilling a damsel-in-distress role, she becomes an active, dynamic protagonist. Even when the trolls hint at an additional romance with Kristoff, she stays focused on the task at hand, helping Elsa save their kingdom. The troll's song, "Fixer-Upper," seems focused on romantic relationships with problematic lyrics like "so she's a bit of a fixer-upper / her brain's a bit betwixt / get the fiancé out of the way / and the whole thing will be fixed," but the advice, "people make bad choices if they're mad or scared or stressed / but throw a little love their way, and you'll bring out their best," fits exactly what Elsa needs (01:07:20, 1:07:40). In fact, when Elsa "freezes" in fear, Anna plays an essential protagonist role by choosing Elsa's love and repairing their bond. Therefore, rather than showcasing a problematic rivalry or allowing Elsa to develop into a villainess, Disney strives to develop both women as individuals who help each other achieve personal success and happiness.

As a part of this process, Anna's healing "true love's kiss" occurs through her sisterly relationship rather than a conventional heterosexual romance, which produces a parody of well-known "true love" elements by turning Anna's fiancée Hans into a villain. The emphasis on romance depicts a "traditional" gender role expectation, present even for other more recent, active princess depictions. So while Marcia Lieberman and many scholars after her remind readers that fairy tales are known for influencing beliefs including, as her title states, "Some Day My Prince Will Come," *Frozen* moves beyond simply replicating these same romantic customs. Parody is often referred to as "the imitation and transformation of another's words," but Simon Dentith also defines parody as "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive imitation of another cultural production," often used to criticize or for humorous effect (3, 9). Disney's "love at first sight" or "true love" conventions are controversial for their confining gender assumptions, which are imitated, shown to fail, criticized, and reimagined through Anna's relationship with Hans and Elsa. Despite previously singing about love being an open door and being able to "finish each other's sandwiches," Anna and Hans' love-at-first-sight or "mental synchronization" and subsequent engagement does not bode well for Anna (24:42, 24:50). Taking advantage of her desire for a "you and I were just meant to be" type romance, Hans attempts to solidify his power through marriage with her, thus acting like a villain rather than a Prince Charming figure (24:55). After realizing "no one was getting anywhere with [Elsa]" and Anna's desperation for love, he seizes the opportunity, later admitting to Anna he was planning to "stage a little accident for Elsa" and stating, "if only there was someone out there who loved you" (1:16:14, 1:16:24, 1:15:50). Hans' confession proves that his love was an act of coercion or patriarchal manipulation, leading to physical and emotional danger for Anna

instead of personal fulfillment. Rather than having her "love at first sight" romance lead to her "happily ever after," Anna's first relationship becomes a critical transformation of Disney expectations. Moreover, reactions from Elsa and Kristoff further the parodying of these assumptions. For instance, Elsa openly criticizes Anna's quick engagement: "You can't marry a man you just met" (26:38). Anna's response, "you can if it's true love," along with Elsa's retort, "Anna, what do you know about true love," parodies the validity of previous Disney romances (26:39). Anna demonstrates the same stubbornness to Kristoff, who reacts similarly to Elsa: "Wait, you got engaged to someone you just met that day?" (40:45). Repeating it again in further shock and ridicule, he echoes the humor behind the expectation of Disney's love-at-first-sight romances while she maintains that "Hans is not a stranger"—despite the fact that she really does not know anything about him (40:55, 41:14). Thus, *Frozen* continues to play with the expectation of marriage for Disney princess characters, allowing Anna and Elsa to display personal choices that have rarely been offered to women in previous films of this kind.

Such parodying of romantic love cultivates gender flexibility through the development of female characters beyond the confines of typical romantic interests. Specifically, Anna's ability to move from a problematic experience of romance toward satisfaction through sisterly love displays how romantic relationships can not only be detrimental for some female characters but also that other ways of healthy loving exist as well—albeit still narrowly defined. Anna's insistence she is "not *that* princess," implying her lesser importance as the younger sibling, and her continuation of "it's just me" statements suggests she values herself less as a person, explaining in part why she initially looks to heterosexual love for happiness (17:54,18:03). Although she does seem to find joy in a

conventional romantic relationship with Kristoff later in the film, her main focus on Elsa ensures that the establishment of marriage does not becomes her end goal within the film. Elsa also escapes this fate: by avoiding pairing Elsa with a significant other (she also never states an interest in a romantic relationship), Disney enables her to focus on her own development rather than needing to change for or be defined by her relationship with a male character.

Although Elsa and Anna's differing attitudes toward romance puts these sisters at odds, their continued love for each other and lack of competition over or distraction with romance allows them to discover themselves as individuals and their bond with one another. Anna's sacrifice for her sister rather than a romantic partner establishes herself as an active, nurturing protagonist and leads Elsa to stop the storm and thaw the landscape. Additionally, despite hints toward a heteronormative relationship between Anna and Kristoff, finding Elsa remains the driving goal for both characters, and no concrete details about the status of their relationship (beyond a kiss) ever form within the film. Instead, Anna learns she has more than one day or chance to meet "the One," and can explore love, connection, and happiness through friendships and her sisterly bond (14:34). Thus, the sisters create two varying concepts of womanhood and femininity within masculine, public spaces and feminine, private spheres.

As climactic proof of her sisterly bond, Anna saves herself, Elsa, and changes the fate of their kingdom, and through this act of true love, both sisters safely return to the castle. Escaping the patriarchal confines of the castle and attempting to return to her nature isolation, Elsa pleads with Hans to take care of Anna in her stead (1:25:10). Her intentions remain focused on saving Anna, distracting her from seeing Hans as a potential threat.

Taking advantage of Elsa's love for her sister by saying she killed her, despite being personally responsible for leaving Anna to die, Hans uses the moment of trauma to swing his sword (1:25:28, 1:26:19). Acknowledging her chance at being saved by seeing Kristoff, who could have been her true love, Anna instead chooses to step in between Hans and Elsa's prone form just as her own body turns completely to ice (1:25:52, 1:26:20). Due to the aforementioned establishment of Elsa as a protagonist, she does not count as a typical "witch" or evil character and therefore does not need to be punished with death as Cashdan argues: "for a fairy tale to succeed . . . the witch must die " (30). However, he later declares, "as fairy tales evolve, it is likely that accommodation with the witch may become more significant than her elimination" (251). Cashdan's view of success focuses on the psychological benefit of fairy tales for children but still touches on the vital notion of adapting beyond the former model of death or defeat for the (predominately female) antagonists. A change thus occurs because of Elsa's power and her relationship with Anna, creating the significant development of female bonding as healing true love.

Disney still uses this moment to portray the common development needed to restore order to the kingdom, but the individual agency within these characters creates a more empowering adaptation. Heidi Hansson reveals this "traditional" process:

> The Ice Queen is . . . the kind of woman who needed to be defeated and controlled, or . . . made less powerful and more docilely feminine. Unsurprisingly, the feminization process is usually emblematized as the coming of spring . . . . based on the idea that sun, warmth and thaw are their symbolic correspondences kindness and goodness. (64)

Instead of such a progression, having Anna remind Elsa about love in order to thaw the

winter continues the transformation for Elsa as a protagonist who now sees the goodness within herself, and also allows these women to help each other rather than being controlled or defeated by a male character. Rather than resorting to striking and breaking nature like the men in the beginning of the film, Anna's nurturing of Elsa's potential changes Elsa's fate of destruction (like the well-known Ice or Snow Queen figures) and Anna's destiny of domestic confinement to ones of individuality and continued power. Nevertheless, Elsa's powers still need to be utilized for the safety of the kingdom—without damaging her political authority or personal well being. To accomplish this, as Anna thaws, she reminds Elsa she loves her, and Olaf states, "an act of true love will thaw a frozen heart," leading to Elsa's realization, "love will thaw" (1:27:46, 1:27:51). Embracing the constructive side of her abilities through love, Elsa returns the land to its natural season, spring (1:28:02). By restoring the kingdom, she no longer needs to be alone within the nature landscape but can return to the castle as a heroine with the personal power and confidence she learned from her female-nature connection experience. Consequently, Elsa brings her skills and individuality from the feminine, private space into the masculine, public sphere.

While Elsa's connection with nature strengthens within natural landscapes, this link must also transfer to cultural spaces to reestablish her political authority as well as maintain her personal power. The patriarchal culture depicted in the beginning of the film may have the skills to manage aspects of nature, but they cannot create it in the private sphere as Elsa does, nor do these ordinary citizens have the knowledge of the public, political sphere she has prepared for. Elsa, on the other hand, has the ability to bridge the gap between these gendered physical and knowledge spaces. Nancy Duncan reiterates, "as opposed to the private sphere, [the public sphere] is the discursive and material space where the state and its

powers, as well as oppressive aspects of the dominant culture . . . are open to challenge by those who have been marginalized in various ways," which produces an opportunity for success for Anna and Elsa (130). When marginalized and confined by patriarchal domination within the public sphere, Elsa finds empowerment and freedom within the private sphere. However, Elsa's individuality previously came through isolation from her community and a more dramatic separation from her sister. Since female independence should not require segregation, she needs to return to the public sphere to truly challenge this oppression and reestablish her political power. Elsa's sustainment of the female-nature connection beyond the private sphere, a vital goal of ecofeminism as a whole, makes her return home, even when confronted by patriarchal forces, successful.

By wielding her female-nature and political power within masculine, public and private, feminine spheres, Elsa breaks down the segregation of gendered spaces. When Elsa changes the winter to spring, she does so in the area near the patriarchal reaches of the castle rather than the isolated, nature space of the North Mountain. Rather than being able to wield her power only in nature or utilize her political authority just within the castle walls, she merges these spaces by using both to reestablish both Arendelle's weather and her place as queen. Stacy Alaimo extends the following as an encouraging step for feminism: "Disrupting the opposition between nature and culture opens up spaces for feminisms . . . . [creating] alternatives that neither seek an untainted, utterly female space outside of culture nor cast off bodies, matter, and nature as that which is forever debased" (10). The blending of gendered spaces in *Frozen* utilizes these desires, opening up more possibilities for Anna and Elsa within public, cultural spaces as well as inviting others, like Kristoff, to feminine, nature landscapes. Rather than this female-nature space and associated abilities being seen as lesser,

Elsa's welcome back to the castle includes citizens eagerly and happily watching Elsa use her powers on her own terms. Her icy transformation of the castle also makes a personal imprint for her rule rather than blindly continuing her father's legacy. According to Daphne Spain, "segregation reinforces gender stratification and thus that modifying spatial arrangements, by definition, alters social processes" (6-7). Now using love to utilize her abilities and no longer needing to conceal or fear her power, Elsa follows Spain's process by modifying the courtyard into a skating rink for everyone to enjoy, including her and Anna. This return to using her magical abilities for her and her sister's enjoyment portrays a return to their sisterhood within the castle and sharing this with the citizens around them displays a profound openness between Elsa and the people of Arendelle. By using her nature-based power inside the castle, Elsa blurs the boundary between nature and culture—inspiring respect and enjoyment rather than fear for the winter elements she utilizes. Additionally, through the active alteration of the public space, Elsa brings her female-nature power from the private sphere into the public, further merging the social expectations that accompany these gendered locations. Such an inclusive space could then lead to other democratic spaces where individuals are free to express themselves, a value celebrated by third wave feminists.

Within the world of Disney, Elsa's ability to resist and transcend expected gender space categorization expands on feminist interests in destabilizing binaries and separation: they can now live in public and private castle places, wielding the political and personal power needed to change their kingdom and achieve steps toward equity and equality for themselves. This desegregation of gendered spaces then enables the sisters to defeat harmful patriarchal influences. For instance, Anna punches Hans to satisfy herself, but to complete the typical villain defeat, Elsa also orders him into a prison cell on his ship, sending Hans

back to the Southern Isles to receive further punishment from his brothers (1:29:20, 1:29:42). In addition, Elsa has men lead the Duke to his ship and inform him that Arendelle will no longer trade with Weselton—orders that serve to cement Elsa's place among her people by ridding the kingdom of destructive influences (1:29:53). Hans and the Duke, patriarchal figures in their respective countries, represent a controlling and antagonistic masculinity that becomes unhealthy for Anna and Elsa as well as Arendelle. With such dangerous figures gone, the potential for a new and different system arises. Patrick D. Murphy states: "The heroes of Disney animated features are almost always produced by circumstance rather than by design . . . . they conclude their adventures with only their circumstances altered; their characters remain fundamentally unchanged" ("The Whole Wide World Was Scrubbed Clean: The Androcentric Animation of Denatured Disney" 134). At first glance, this may seem to be the case for Elsa and Anna; yet, Anna's growth after her step away from love-at-first-sight romance and what Elsa gained from her experiences showcases the potential for circumstances to impact these characters as well as their kingdom. Thus, Elsa becomes free to rule Arendelle with her ecofeminist power and establish a balance between her kingdom and its natural environment.

Maleficent also utilizes a female relationship, strengthened within the feminine-nature space, to remove patriarchal obstacles and desegregate gendered spaces. Maleficent and Aurora's familial connection reaches a climactic "true love's kiss" moment like Anna and Elsa's, portraying the healing bond between two women. Although moving beyond conflict is difficult, Maleficent's link with her goddaughter eventually leads to Stefan's defeat and the application of political power to merge the human and fairy kingdoms through Aurora.

Almost as destructive as direct male violence, patriarchy also thrives on conflict between women, which Disney has depicted through many representations of "good" heroines and "bad" villainesses—portrayed as cruel witches, queens, or stepmothers—through the years. Numerous foundational works focused on these gender and sex depictions, including Kay Stone's 1975 article, "Things Walt Disney Never Told Us," and Lieberman's 1972 article, "Some Day My Prince Will Come." Additionally, Amy Davis analyzes the convention of rivalry between female characters, who often become enemies, evident in *Sleeping Beauty* and other Disney Princess films (226). For example, in *Snow White*, an evil, older Queen and stepmother responds out of jealousy and vanity toward the younger Snow White, and in *The Little Mermaid*, competition over the same significant other leads to the death of the witch-like villainess, Ursula. Furthermore, M. Keith Booker describes *Sleeping Beauty's* Maleficent as "the epitome of the threatening female, the exact opposite of the beautiful, but submissive, Aurora, just . . . [like] the wicked stepmother against the virtuous Cinderella" (28). Aurora from *Maleficent* is still portrayed as beautiful and submissive, especially in comparison to Maleficent or *Frozen*'s Anna and Elsa. The competition that commonly occurs between this type of passive protagonist and active antagonist often resolves through the death or defeat of the antagonist and a marriage for the protagonist, although such a "happily ever after" shows a limited concept of fulfillment for women.

Disney initially seems to utilize this expected rivalry between Maleficent and Aurora within the castle space. Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario analyzes the antagonism of the common "evil" role: "Where male power is reduced or erased . . . the greatest tension is created between women. [Female villains] repress and victimize the princess through her childhood" (42). In *Sleeping Beauty*, King Stefan is referred to as Good King Stefan and appears to be

friends with King Henry (his son Prince Phillip has an arranged marriage with Aurora), while Maleficent is described as an evil fairy with incredible powers. Though the male characters are in positions of authority, they seem helpless in the face of Maleficent's abilities and the conflict remains directed between the female characters. Disney mirrors Maleficent's antagonistic qualities for part of *Maleficent* as well, despite the increased danger of male authority and power through King Stefan and the castle. Do Rozario's observation of female villains occurs in part as Maleficent's power and drive for vengeance leads to the victimization of Aurora through her curse. Rather than encouraging female solidarity and retribution toward the actual villain, King Stefan, their rivalry depicts Maleficent and Aurora as enemies among these dangerous patriarchal spaces and figures. Yet, if the absence of male authoritative power in *Maleficent* would result in female rivalry, according to Do Rozario's statement, then the presence of dangerous, patriarchal figures could result in female bonding. Although Maleficent initially acts as an antagonist, she ultimately becomes a fellow protagonist, while King Stefan reveals himself to be the villain. Emphasizing the growing bond between Aurora and Maleficent in the face of his continued power and villainy, therefore, seems to display *Maleficent*'s characters reverting back to this pattern.

Maleficent ultimately deviates from such a well-known rivalry as well as the expected Disney princess pattern of "true love's kiss" and heterosexual romance. Murphy describes the concept of love-at-first-sight, which often accompanies a "true love's kiss," by stating: "love-at-first-sight depends upon marketable products: physical beauty, acculturation, singular traits"—such as Ariel's voice in *The Little Mermaid* ("The Whole Wide World Was Scrubbed Clean: The Androcentric Animation of Denatured Disney" 132). Aurora, given the gift of beauty by the pixie Knotgrass, "did grow in grace and beauty" as she matured (28:18,

42:46). Along with her appearance, the main qualities she appears to exude throughout the film include happiness, curiosity, and kindness. Yet, despite Aurora's similarity with previous, superficial Disney princesses, her character has opportunities within *Maleficent* she did not have in *Sleeping Beauty*. Connecting to events from the previous adaptation, Aurora meets Prince Phillip in the woods before she returns to the castle (59:10). They appear interested in each other, but "love-at-first-sight" sentiments are not expressed. Maleficent, who does not even believe in this idealistic notion of love, still remains willing to risk her own life by bringing Prince Phillip into the castle in an attempt to revive Aurora (1:10:10). However, this notion of love and "true love's kiss" within *Maleficent* are ultimately not used as they conventionally were within *Sleeping Beauty*. Instead, Maleficent's work within the feminine, nature space creates a loving bond between her and Aurora, leading to the "true love's kiss" that ultimately heals them both. When Phillip's kiss does not work, Disney parodies its original emphasis on romance and shifts toward a mother-daughter love (1:14:50). Booker notes the constructive message Disney provides by including more realistic, varied family units, but also reiterates that the popularity of the family structure can be problematic due to how children are indoctrinated with the "'us' (the family) vs. 'them' (everyone else)" mentality along with other patriarchal concepts within that family structure (185). Patriarchal ideas such as compulsory heterosexuality are thus able to continue because although linking true love to familial relationships rather than romance represents a new pattern, the characters are still assumed to be heterosexual and expected to form families of their own.[26]

[26] As "children's" or "family" films, Disney does not overtly showcase sexuality, but due to "Christian values" does not depict the variety of sexualities and orientations that exist in society. Adrienne Rich describes "the bias of compulsory heterosexuality" by stating: "Heterosexuality is presumed as a 'sexual preference' of 'most women,' either implicitly or explicitly" ("Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" 632-633).

Nevertheless, Maleficent's familial bond with Aurora has an encouraging influence on both of these characters, leading to their mutual healing and potentially beneficial changes for the kingdoms. Maleficent's moment of apology and sacrifice solidifies her maternal commitment to Aurora:

> I will not ask your forgiveness because what I have done to you is unforgivable. I was so lost in hatred and revenge, sweet Aurora. You stole what was left of my heart, and now I've lost you forever. I swear no harm will come to you as long as I live, and not a day shall pass that I don't miss your smile. (1:15:50)

Her acknowledgement that what she has done remains inexcusable demonstrates a deep level of regret for her vengeful actions. Maleficent also confesses how her feelings changed despite being resigned to the curse's fate. Not only does her heartfelt message prove she has emotionally healed, but after her declaration, she kisses Aurora's forehead, providing the "true love's kiss" that revives her goddaughter (1:16:46). Although the moment of healing takes place within the castle, this only occurs because of the bond and healing process started within the nature space of the Moors. Maleficent then proves this commitment to protect Aurora as they leave the castle.

Although nature spaces appear to be safe for women within the film, culture spaces must then be renegotiated in order to also be peaceful for female characters. Duncan claims marginalized populations can challenge the powerful public sphere, where the "oppressive aspects of the dominant culture" are contained (130). Like Duncan's assertion, Maleficent

---

Frozen and *Maleficent* still portray compulsory heterosexuality, displaying the "normalization" (heteronormativity) of opposite-sex romance for Anna and Aurora alongside familial love. Nevertheless, having characters such as Elsa, who does not exhibit personal romantic interest, and Maleficent, who has a male companion rather than a romantic partner, portrays the potential for such characters to receive love and fulfillment beyond sexual attraction and marriage.

and Aurora are marginalized as women within the patriarchal space but still challenge this dominance together. The opportunity for change, therefore, despite the challenges and danger, must take place within the public sphere because the official power and capability for lasting impact exists within this official space. Yet, such a process, while necessary, is challenging. As Rob Nixon illustrates, place is temporary and "must be constantly renegotiated in the face of changes that arrive from without and within, some benign, others potentially ruinous" (18). As Maleficent and Aurora physically navigate and survive the castle's dangerous space, Aurora finds and reunites Maleficent with her wings, who then defeats King Stefan in battle (1:20:32). Seizing the opportunity King Stefan's death provides within the official landscape, Maleficent negotiates a peace by crowning his heir, Aurora, as Queen of the Moors and human realm, thereby redefining these gendered kingdoms as united. In a ceremony in the Moors, Maleficent gives Aurora a crown and states: "Our kingdoms have been unified. You have your Queen" (1:27:06). Although a crowning or a "true love's kiss" closely relates to typical Disney endings, it distinguishes itself with a familial bond between two women rather than a heterosexual marriage.

Additionally, this shift hints at changes beyond the established social order seen in earlier Disney princess films such as *Mulan* and *Sleeping Beauty*. Disney princesses, despite their accomplishments, often return home to the domestic, private sphere, like Mulan who thus becomes "safely re-enclosed in a traditional feminine role, even as her heroism is safely projected into an exotic fantasy world" (Booker 65). Maleficent also returns home as a heroine, but she does so while creating change with her political power that extends beyond the "traditional" role and the private sphere. In fact, the narrator of *Maleficent* specifically declares: "So you see, the story is not quite as you were told. And I should know, for I was

the one they called Sleeping Beauty" (1:26:50). Calling attention to *Maleficent* as a retelling of *Sleeping Beauty* emphasizes the differences between the films, including the inclusion of more contemporary concepts of gendered roles and spaces. For example, all the fairy creatures in attendance cheer at the news of the crowning, with the border guard bowing and Aurora bowing in return—thus demonstrating the mutual respect Aurora will hopefully use through her leadership position (1:27:28). Phillip, as a part of the desegregation process, is welcome within the Moors as Maleficent and Diaval leave to enjoy flying among the clouds—although neither matriarchal figure are focused on romance (1:27:44, 1:28:17). Amy Davis, while acknowledging the beneficial steps female protagonists have made, reiterates: "The heroines of 1990s Disney films . . . . are often devout care-takers of those around them [and] require the protection—or at least the affirmation—of a male authority figure" (219). In order for Maleficent to break from that mold, she must care for herself rather than sacrificing only for others (like Aurora) or needing a masculine figure (such as Diaval) to save her. As a part of such development, Maleficent also helps Aurora grow beyond her previous role as a sleeping beauty who marries a prince.

Instead, as Queen of the Moors and the human kingdom, Aurora will serve as the matriarchal leader of both spaces. Aurora was raised in an in-between sphere, with her cottage home exemplifying the human and domestic while surrounded by woods representing nature and the fairy world. Alaimo describes this as a hybrid space in literature that does not form typical boundaries between domestic and nature places (39). However, Aurora needs to change the official landscape of the human kingdom rather than going back to this neutral, hybrid landscape. According to Spain, modifying spaces leads to an alteration of gender and social practices (6-7). Thus, shifting from a patriarchal to a matriarchal leader could lead to

the further desegregation of the gendered spaces of the dominions and an overall safer environment for women and the creatures of the Moors. If places are more fluid and less focused on boundaries or categories, then the two kingdoms would not have to be divided into dualistic locations and the power relations they represent. Aurora, who embodies both nature as Queen of the Moors and culture as Queen of the human kingdom, has the opportunity to belong to both realms. Rather than staying isolated within nature or completely conforming to the culture sphere, Aurora merges the feminine, nature and masculine, culture kingdoms together, which potentially fosters a further blending of gendered spaces as well as the mixing of nature and culture landscapes.

Male Characters as Allies for Gender Spatial Desegregation

As contemporary society changes boundaries and dissolves binaries, so could and should Disney, representing the reality of gender fluidity and intersectional identities. Although Disney does not display the actual range or gender representation possible within these movies, *Frozen* and *Maleficent* have beneficial elements that continue a new pattern of more empowered female characters in Disney Princess films: individual female power (political authority and personal magic) and female bonding that leads to the removal of patriarchal obstacles and the merging of gendered spaces. Empowerment and desegregation both contribute to an increase in gender fluidity for characters as well. Clare Bradford states: "While the narratives of Princess films are driven by the Princess' desires for heterosexual romance and marriage, the most compelling figures in these films suggest far more ambiguous and fluid identities and desires" (183). Along with moving away from the primary emphasis on heterosexual romantic relationships, characters like Elsa and Maleficent are

beginning to portray a blend of antagonist and protagonist qualities. Elizabeth Bell, referring to fairy godmothers, notes: "women . . . are not bifurcated into good and bad, but represent a continuum of cultural representations of women's powers and performances" (121). Maleficent, a fairy godmother, and Elsa continue a development of female characters who also wield political and personal power, although they still display Disney's lack of diversity. Furthermore, Maleficent's fluidity of masculine and feminine attributes, as previously explored, creates a new addition to Disney's conventional pantheon of characters.

As Disney develops more empowered female characters, their male figures must also adapt. Increasingly complex male portrayals are present within these films, assisting the female depictions' individual growth and familial bonds. Male characters often have their own Disney films, such as *Peter Pan* (1953), rely on Disney princesses to help save or change them (*Beauty and the Beast* and *Princess and the Frog*), or overshadow the Disney Princess within, as in *Aladdin*. Flynn's depiction as an equally complex character to Rapunzel, whom he helps throughout *Tangled*, occurs without him becoming a more important character (although he often appears to dominate the action and speaking lines); however, Kristoff and Diaval from *Frozen* and *Maleficent* do not have such equal screen time. This appears to be a setback regarding the potential for more egalitarian relationships between genders, which could easily be present within friendships or familial bonds rather than resorting to adding a romance on at the end, as in *Mulan* (1998). In fact, the main antagonist can be the setting or even people who are also protagonists (like Elinor from *Brave*). Although romance does occur between Kristoff and Anna (they share a kiss at 1:31:01 and 1:31:04), balancing screen time between them and Elsa allows for two women to maintain their main character status. Also, coming from the representation of masculinity

within *Brave* where the men are immature or childish, Kristoff and Diaval seem like unusually helpful masculine figures. Both characters are beneficial influences (although not much of their individuality reveals itself) that assist female characters without overshadowing or requiring women to help or change for them.

Therefore, both masculine and feminine characters are moving toward a third-wave feminist understanding of gender. Deborah Siegel, in *The Women's Movement Today*, describes a few of the ways to encapsulate third-wave feminism:

> Key components . . . include an emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity; an assumption that the category of 'woman' is no longer the only identity worth examining; an insistence that the war for women's social, political, and economic equality is far from over; . . . . a critical engagement with popular culture; and an embrace of contradiction. (138)

A third-wave exploration of masculinity involves the diversity of and contradictions within these representations, alongside the reality of gender inequalities within patriarchal society and structures.[27] Although the social construction of masculinity places men in power positions and associates them with the public, cultural sphere, men can also feel an affinity with natural landscapes and be ecofeminist allies. While acknowledging the unequal access to these spheres and assisting the desegregation of such spaces, men can serve as advocates for women and nature. Examples of woman/female/femininity and man/male/masculinity are present within feminist theory and pop culture, as works from authors like Judith Butler continue to shape how contemporary feminists work to understand the gender continuum as

[27] According to Michael Kimmel in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2008): "Masculinity refers to the social roles, behaviors, and meanings prescribed for men in any given society at any one time. As such, it emphasizes gender, not biological sex, and the diversity of identities among different groups of men. Although we experience gender to be an internal facet of identity, the concept of masculinity is produced within the institutions of society and through our daily interactions" (1).

well as the binaries society continues to impose and expect. For instance, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990) includes Butler's argument about the performance of gender in reaction to other theorists like Simone de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault: "If there is something right in Beauvoir's claim that one is not born, but rather becomes a woman, it follows that woman itself is a term in process, a becoming, a constructing that cannot rightfully be said to originate or to end" (43). Although male protagonists of Disney remain predominantly white, able-bodied, and muscular, the emphasis on diversity has inspired a blending of gendered attributes to create more realistic constructions or processes of masculinity.

Emerging from the one-dimensional Prince Charming characters and Beast-like caricatures that require domestication at the hands of a woman, characters like Kristoff and Diaval represent a pattern of male figures within Disney princess films that assist in empowering their fellow female protagonists. Shown in opposition to harmful patriarchal obstacles, they help work toward a gender and nature balance in *Frozen* and *Maleficent*. Without equal screen time and thus the chance to develop as individuals, they seem less empowered than the female characters within these films, representing a potential contradiction to the feminist focus on egalitarian relationships; yet, this imbalance may also represent an equitable rather than equal opportunity for male characters within much needed, female-driven stories.

Along with their female power and sisterly bond, Elsa and Anna leave the dangerous public sphere with indirect assistance from Olaf. In order to escape the castle in which they both remain separately trapped, Elsa uses her nature-oriented power while Olaf helps Anna.

Although Olaf is a separate character presented as masculine, Elsa herself made "him" out of natural elements. Consequently, as an extension of Elsa, Olaf allows her to assist Anna indirectly or unconsciously. His ideas expressed through the song "In Summer" also display the optimistic, child-like warmth Elsa temporarily left unexpressed (47:20). For example, "when life gets rough, I like to hold onto my dream" references the hope and confidence Elsa currently lacks but needs in order to thaw the winter (48:45). Although Olaf seems like a goofy idealist, thinking ideas like "hot and cold are both so intense, put 'em together it just makes sense" does not just refer to his misunderstanding of what warm weather will do to him as a snowman (48:30). Olaf's statement also foreshadows the need for Anna (warmth) and Elsa (coldness) to come together, even though their reunion seems so difficult. Anna's "summer breeze" can therefore "blow away [Elsa's] winter storm" as these powerful women bond to repair the weather (48:06). In fact, their love and the assistance of male characters like Olaf leads to the desegregation of the entire kingdom.

Yet, Olaf and other "generic" male characters also showcase the lack of visibility of female depictions and potentially overshadow their agency as women. Olaf, like Sven and the rock trolls, does not overtly appear or state his sex or gender; yet, his masculine identity is implied through the casting of a male actor, Josh Gad, for Olaf's voice. Thus, as Monique Wittig points out, "the masculine is not the masculine but the general" (60). This lack of female representation or visibility within films does not match the proportion of women in society and has been noted by numerous organizations such as Miss Representation and the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media.[28] Such an overwhelming amount of male

[28] Disney's use of white characters or Anglicizing protagonists over diverse "Others" is also supported by C. Richard King, Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo, and Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo, who further explicate: "non-human characters are not only 'turned into' male and female humans (that is, anthropomorphized) but turned into white

characters could potentially serve to overshadow main figures like Anna, who primarily appears in scenes alongside Kristoff and Olaf, perhaps implying a lack of agency or self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, having male characters certainly becomes important in establishing gender balance and egalitarian relationships, especially when showcasing the wide range of masculinity representations, and can be beneficial for female characters' development.

Instead of merely focusing on the need to overthrow patriarchal forces, *Frozen* more importantly establishes Kristoff as an active male protagonist. Previous Disney depictions understandably led Stone to declare: "Many recent writers consider both women and men as naturally separate but potentially equal—if men shape up" ("Feminist Approaches to Interpretation" 234). Much has changed since the publishing of Stone's 1986 article and its contemporaries. For instance, in their 2008 article "Post-Princess Models of Gender," Ken Gillam and Shannon Wooden focus on similar values through what they view as the "progressive postfeminist model of gender," which entails a development of an "alpha male" dealing with emasculation, dependence on homosocial relationships, and desire with feminine values and/or objects (2).[29] As Gillam and Wooden show, since Stone's famous publications, Disney has attempted to embrace the third-wave feminist and ecocritical view of using male allies. Rather than a mere reversal of female power at the expense of all male characters, work toward a balance with patriarchal and natural elements takes place.

---

and non-white humans (that is, they are racialized) as well" (*Animating Difference: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Contemporary Films for Children* 95).

[29] Leslie Heywood defines postfeminist as "'literally 'after feminism,' whereas 'third wave' implie[s] a continuation of feminism with a difference" (*The Women's Movement Today* xv). Many feminists do not agree with the concept of postfeminism (thus implying that feminism is "post" or over). The "progressive" gender role as described by Gillam and Wooden, although also a problematic term, does align with egalitarian, feminist aims. Additionally, feminist discourses use the term "alpha" male in connection to toxic or hyper masculinity, aligned with problematic gender binaries and confining values, although Gillam and Wooden appear to use this term to describe a primary patriarchal figure that may or may not be toxic.

Kristoff's connection with nature and respect for the sisters' authority therefore displays how both male and female figures can coexist within public, masculine spaces like the castle and private, feminine spaces, including the North Mountain.

Kristoff's presence thereby fulfills elements of Gillam and Wooden's masculine character description. For example, he neither verbally nor nonverbally appears emasculated by being saved by Anna (although he is initially, and rightfully, doubtful of her helpfulness), or shown as being weak for failing against Elsa's powers. Although such actions do not make Kristoff "progressive," he does challenge conventional gender identities—such as the problematic concept of an "alpha male"—by spending time around women who are personally more powerful (Elsa) as well as politically more powerful (Anna and Elsa) while promoting more egalitarian values rather than resisting such developments. Along with the realistic need for a masculine character that remains unconcerned about being "emasculated" by strong women and their beliefs, Kristoff also values homosocial relationships—although he does not appear dependent on male relationships either. Sven's sex is never expressly stated, but the name primarily refers to a male. As far as the antlers are concerned, male reindeer generally lose them in the winter, but since Arendelle is supposed to be experiencing spring weather, this could be further evidence of Sven's male identity. Kristoff's sibling or best friend appreciation for his reindeer "buddy" therefore establishes the same homosocial bond Gillam and Wooden value.

Additionally, Kristoff's desire to live outside among the ice he values so dearly aligns with Elsa's ecofeminist actions and beliefs. Gillam and Wooden further argue these qualities create a well-rounded, more realistic male character in comparison to the more two-dimensional prince figures in older Disney films ("Post-Princess Models of Gender" 3).

Prince Charming depictions, often associated with their heroic deeds and romantic intentions, provide a very narrow model for masculinity that also confine expectations for their female character counterparts. However, Kristoff, despite also being romantically aligned with Anna, assists rather than acts as a lone hero; thus, Disney provides an active, individual male portrayal without overshadowing the deeds of the female characters within the film. Kristoff also acknowledges the unnecessary emphasis on romance, telling his rock troll family, "Can we please stop talking about this? We've got a real, actual problem here" (1:06:19). Rather than being defined by such a stock characteristic, Kristoff develops his own personal and professional life alongside Anna. Thus, like Elsa, he represents a newer type of Disney character that rejects the need for or sole focus on romantic love, although neither completely excludes the place of love within their lives. But rather than just being satisfied with a male lead character who embraces and respects masculine and feminine qualities, having such male depictions needs to be in conjunction with well-rounded female leads. By containing a balance of gender qualities and showing respect for the empowered and successful sisters, Kristoff represents a feminist male ally.

His combination of gender qualities also means that he does not completely fit within the dualistic notions of the male sphere of culture or the feminine sphere of nature. For instance, he is not shown using the methods the male chorus of "Frozen Heart" emphasizes, although he watches them as a child and presumably establishes himself using the same ice trade business practices (2:15). Additionally, seen only with Sven or his troll family, Kristoff seems to be a cultural outsider and tries to help Anna by turning to what he knows, the masculine-nature connection of his troll family. In contrast to the masculine-nature relationship from the beginning of the film, Kristoff and his troll family appear to have a

connection with nature rather than control over it (apart perhaps from Grand Pabbie). After Anna's injury, Kristoff takes her to his family for healing, led by a patriarch, Grand Pabbie. Despite seeming like a secretive, private sphere (and thus attributed to femininity), the patriarchal governing structure of the troll family establishes a cultural, public space within the masculine-nature landscape. While still controlled by a patriarch, the trolls have a connection with nature that displays itself as helpful rather than harmful. Although Anna does not remember, Pabbie the grandfather troll healed her after her childhood accident. However, Elsa's magic grew more powerful since childhood and this time froze Anna's heart. Subsequently, the masculine-nature connection alone cannot combat the power of Elsa's female-nature connection, especially concerning the nurturing powers of the heart. His ability to fix the previous injury to her head therefore links to the mind/body dualisms: the masculine associated with mind and reason and the feminine associated with the nurturing and warmth of the heart. Despite linking to these problematic gender dualisms, the trolls give Anna the knowledge of healing and "true love" through the song "Fixer Upper," telling her how to help herself and her sister (1:05:35). Spain claims: "Information control is . . . a way to control prestige, power, and wealth" (21). However, once shared, knowledge no longer becomes confined or managed by one group but spreads the power to others. Kristoff and the trolls share what they know because of their eagerness to help Anna, but rather than Anna's success being entirely dependent on male figures, success hinges on Anna saving herself and Elsa through their loving bond.

This connection with nature and Anna showcases Kristoff as an ecofeminist male presence within the natural landscape. His career relies on harvesting ice, but—distinguishing himself from the nameless male figures from the beginning of the film—he

befriended a reindeer and his family consists of trolls, all of whom are connected to nature. Therefore, he chooses to bond with, not against or in dominion over, natural elements as he utilizes what the landscape around him has to offer. Contrasting Kristoff with Hans, the overt romantic interest and villain, then shows how Kristoff's qualities benefit Anna and Elsa. His eagerness to view the ice within Elsa's castle in all its glory ("Oh come on, it's a palace made of ice; ice is my life.") shows ice as a passion and a "love" of his rather than just a job or a resource (53:37). Reining that eagerness in when he does not get permission to enter and making the conscious choice to wait outside with Olaf shows Kristoff's respect for Elsa's privacy (until Anna gets hurt) as well as Anna's handling of the situation (53:31). As Val Plumwood examines, valuing the female-nature connection remains vital, but challenging culture as superior and as solely man's place becomes the next and more important step (*Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* 33). Accordingly, along with Kristoff's appreciation for the female-nature connection and his own bond with nature, he also shows no hesitation in helping the sisters regain their political positions within the masculine-attributed public sphere.

By respecting the sisters' power within public and private locations, as well as demonstrating his own abilities in both, Kristoff assists in the desegregation of gendered spaces. Just as Elsa's skills as a queen and her female-nature connection are valuable, Kristoff's skills within the ice trade, used with regard for nature, should also be appreciated. Dorothy Dinnerstein argues the importance of how the "female sharing of public power . . . . [should] draw on the traditional talents which women and men, respectively, now embody" (195-196). Her statement from 1989 still applies regarding Kristoff's respect for Elsa and Anna's political power and their admiration for his love of nature and animals. Elsa's ability

to work with nature, shared by Kristoff, produces a step toward gender and nature balance despite her magical abilities being a very different (and more powerful) connection from his regard for his rock troll family and Sven. This mutual respect also transfers to the public sphere, where he appreciates their political authority and in return becomes rewarded with a position that shows thankfulness for Kristoff's gifts and interest in the ice trade. By recognizing Kristoff's abilities with the position of "Official Arendelle Ice Master and Deliverer," Elsa shows respect for his work in the ice trade above his peers, sharing his connection with nature within a space generally only attributed to women (1:30:42). And by acknowledging the sisters' personal and political powers, Kristoff displays a masculine willingness to coexist with empowered women within public locations. Along with the continuation of his business, Kristoff also retains his connection with nature through Sven and Olaf, maintaining his presence within the public and private sphere. His masculine character therefore bridges the gendered spaces gap and assists Anna and Elsa in doing the same, desegregating landscapes and serving as a role model for other male allies who support them. As such, Kristoff assists in achieving what Plumwood describes as "a critical, anti-dualist ecological feminism," which questions and breaks down constructed gender identity dualisms so both genders can be included within culture and nature (*Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* 33-35). Thus, while the focus remains on Anna and Elsa as they return to their political positions in the castle, Kristoff continues to be a male ally and friend.

Elsa and Anna overcome spatial and romantic obstacles due to their sisterly bond, Elsa's female-nature connection, and Kristoff's beneficial masculine presence, leading to the merging of gendered spaces and steps toward a gender and nature balance. Through their active choices, Anna and Elsa avoid rivalry and make sacrifices and changes out of love for

each other. The female-nature connection created the space to empower Elsa, who then returns with Anna's help to the masculine, public sphere with her female-nature power intact—reestablishing their power over negative patriarchal influences. Hansson extends the reminder: "masculine and feminine should not be seen as absolute dichotomies, but as culture-defined perceptions, allowing numerous positions along a continuum" (60). Elsa adds elements of gender flexibility to such a goal, despite confining expectations, through her expansion in positions and spaces of power. Along with the sisters' differing portrayal of what being a woman can entail, the presence of Kristoff forms an additional representation of masculinity. Beyond a simplistic overthrow of villains, the parodying of conventional elements, desegregation of gendered spaces, and the helpful male presence of Kristoff produces steps toward a third-wave feminist balance between gender and nature. Consequently, the problematic dualisms feminists have analyzed for so long can begin to break down with the continued blending of spheres.

Diaval also represents the potential for Disney to showcase masculinity in relation to third-wave feminism—a male ally who supports Maleficent and her bond with Aurora. Diaval's role in opposition to the male antagonist, King Stefan, establishes himself as a protagonist and therefore a helpful depiction of masculinity. Continuing the recent development of male antagonists, Hans and Stefan develop into unlikable characters, making Kristoff and Diaval seem like the typical hero or Prince Charming. Yet, these helpful male figures are more than stock love interests or foils to their antagonistic gender counterparts. Pierre Bourdieu analyzes how gendering remains an ingrained part of history and societal structures, invisible to many, "which leads [people] to distinguish themselves by

masculinizing or feminizing themselves" and leads to power dynamics that make constructive relationships between the sexes challenging (84, 110). Just as Elsa's father seeks to control her body and mind in *Frozen*, Maleficent acts out the same masculine control of Diaval—often treating him like an animal-helper (such as Sven) as she changes him into a human, wolf, horse, and dragon with her power. Similar to Elsa, Diaval struggles against this type of confinement, but still succeeds in helping Maleficent grow emotionally in the process. Diaval's limited control over these changes to his form and servitude to Maleficent are therefore problematic, but his role in providing her with emotional guidance becomes invaluable in fostering the familial bond between her and Aurora. Additionally, as a raven, he remains connected to the natural world and seems at home within hybrid places and the Moors, portraying a helpful male, ecofeminist figure in natural landscapes and assisting Maleficent and Aurora's journey into cultural spheres.

As with Kristoff, focusing on elements of Gillam and Wooden's "progressive postfeminist model of gender," as well as their new findings from *Pixar's Boy Stories*, shows how Diaval fits among other recent Disney and Pixar male characters ("Post-Princess Models of Gender" 2). Diaval, like Kristoff never appears to be overtly "emasculated" because he seems to represent a different type of male role rather than a fragile manhood that becomes damaged from empowered femininity. However, Diaval's subservience to Maleficent portrays a problematic master-slave dynamic, which has similar implications to Wooden and Gillam's emphasis on conformity: "Pixar boys [are] taught to lose gracefully, and allowed to discover [their] supposedly 'authentic' identity only in subordination to others" (*Pixar's Boy Stories* 22). Other than his identity as a raven, very little about Diaval's personality, where he comes from, or if he has other family and friends reveals itself. Never pictured without

Maleficent or Aurora, Diaval's identity becomes defined by his initial concern with Maleficent (he is the first to visit her after King Stefan's attack and the only one to see her in the castle ruins), although she initially rejects his companionship (21:44-50). When ready to venture forth, she seeks him out for his wings, and rather than merely being disgusted by the treatment of a fellow victim of human (male) cruelty, she transforms Diaval's "beautiful self" with the intention of relying on him, whether or not such use of power over him is morally right (22:45). In fact, the troublesome elements of boy culture Wooden and Gillam examine, such as "bullying, competition, self-control, . . . [and] risky performances of bravery," occur due to her (*Pixar's Boy Stories* 4). While Diaval chooses to serve Maleficent because she saved his life, she transforms him without his permission and silences him when he protests, taking away Diaval's ability to control his identity and voice. For example, she changes him into whatever shape serves her purpose without his consent, such as when she turns Diaval into a wolf and then dismisses his vocal distress and frustration by turning him back into a raven (46:43). This bullying behavior also physically leads to danger as she transforms him into creatures to draw the attention of soldiers and help defend her from harm, as when Diaval shifts into a dragon and nearly becomes killed or when his transformations appear to be unfamiliar if not painful (1:20:07, 26:21).

Such masculine domination, even to the point of violence or danger of violence, displays a structural aspect of patriarchy. R. W. Connell highlights the need to also look at "masculinity in *women's* personalities," which becomes important within *Maleficent* in order to avoid only focusing on King Stefan as a villain (230, italics in original). Maleficent's strength and power as a female character could be viewed as empowering, but the masculinization of these qualities, shaped by King Stefan and the patriarchal expression of

control, becomes problematic and damaging for her and others like Diaval. As Connell further explicates:

> Rather than attempting to define masculinity as an object (a natural character type, a behavioral average, a norm), we need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives . . . and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture. (71)

The blending of Maleficent's gendered attributes as well as the "unconventional" or "progressive" masculinity portrayed by Diaval not only shows that a "natural" or "norm" remains more of a societal expectation rather than a reality, but also that their gendered lives influence their relationships and vice versa. For example, Maleficent's personality changes affect Diaval's transformations into different forms, impacting the dynamic between them. Yet, as their relationship changes, Diaval helps restore Maleficent to her previous health and happiness.

Although this power difference creates conflict, Maleficent and Diaval are not directly competing with one another; instead, he continues to communicate and assist her as they both focus on helping Aurora. For example, Diaval's frantic defense of Maleficent and Aurora during the battle scene, even as a raven, occurs immediately and more importantly appears to be his own decision (1:18:49). Although as a raven he still seems to feel a responsibility or duty toward Maleficent, in this original form his actions imply more free will then when she changes him into other creatures. Nevertheless, his verbal protests are also powerful in his human shape. Despite his treatment, Diaval's respect for (although this does not mean constant agreement) Maleficent and assistance in her bond with Aurora

establishes him as a male ally. In fact, she appears to grow emotionally not only based on her developing relationship with Aurora but also based on Diaval's reaction to her. For example, excited by the potential for Prince Phillip to be Aurora's "true love's kiss," Diaval's hope is rejected by Maleficent; however, he remains resolute: "Well that might be how you feel, but what about Aurora? That boy could be her only chance; it's her fate anyway" (1:01:10, 1:01:34). Attempting to discard her own anger and fear with her dismissal of Diaval, he calls her out on her actions. Diaval then states: "Go ahead, turn me into whatever you want, a bird, a worm, I don't care anymore" before walking away (01:01:47). Although Maleficent does not call him back, apologize, or even thank him, she appears to be contemplating his plan for Aurora. Therefore, Diaval can still express himself and influence Maleficent, hopefully leading to a more egalitarian relationship. Yet, Diaval and Maleficent's bond seems like a reversed *Beauty and the Beast* scenario, where Diaval "tames" Maleficent's Beast-like anger and pain with his Belle-like domestic kindness—reversing gender stereotypes rather than eliminating this status quo.

In addition to being impacted by his relationship with Maleficent, Diaval is also influenced by homosocial interactions, or lack thereof (Gillam and Wooden "Post-Princess Models of Gender" 2). Such an aspect of masculinity remains vital according to Michael Kimmel as well, who argues: "Masculinity defined through homosocial interaction contains many parts, including the camaraderie, fellowship, and intimacy often celebrated in male culture" (*Manhood in America* 6). Kimmel also clarifies how men focus on control, projecting fears, and escaping when they are unable to deal with the pressure of conforming to their gender role; however, these seem to be struggles that Maleficent deals with rather than Diaval, who does not appear fearful or interested in leaving despite his treatment

(*Manhood in America* 6). Although some of the Moors may be sexed or gendered male, none are obviously done so, which combined with the "evil" men of the human kingdom, does not give Diaval the opportunity to clearly establish a homosocial relationship. The only other male characters in the film, such as King Henry and Stefan, are depicted as outwardly ambitious and greedy. Diaval's support of Aurora and Maleficent against King Stefan furthers his role as a helpful male protagonist and an opposing example of this problematic masculinity. Instead, although it does not appear to bother him or necessarily impact any personal ambitions he may have, Diaval only achieves great power or strength through Maleficent.

Additionally, he follows Maleficent's lead by focusing primarily on her values and subject of interest, Aurora (Gillam and Wooden "Post-Princess Models of Gender" 2). Maleficent must care for the Moors and the creatures within this dominion, so Diaval also respects her duty to the land and its people. As previously noted, Diaval does not act like the patriarchal humans who devalue the Moors and their vernacular space. His place within the Moors is never questioned, as if this area became his home as well (although where he originated is unclear), and he joins her in defending the land despite his feelings toward how she transforms his body (46:20). Diaval not only guards Maleficent and the natural sphere she calls home, but he also respects her place within hybrid and castle spaces, proving himself as a male, ecofeminist ally. However, he never acts as a mere follower. Instead, as mentioned, he actively disapproves of Maleficent's harsh reactions and initial treatment of Aurora, evident when he gives Maleficent judging glances or flaps his wings in protest (38:27, 41:00). He also looks anxious when he tells her about Aurora's birth and concern afterwards as he watches her cackle over her curse, showing unease for Aurora's well-being

(or distress for his situation and expected loyalty) even before meeting Aurora (26: 50, 34:08). Although Maleficent ridicules Diaval's seriousness initially, demonstrating "the social dangers of emotional literacy and display," parenting appears to be one of the "various paths to masculine self-worth" for him, eventually leading him to come with Maleficent into the castle to rescue Aurora (Wooden and Gillam *Pixar's Boy Stories* 4).

Diaval could therefore be construed as a father figure, despite his parenting not fitting into the common nuclear family model. Wooden and Gillam focus on extending similar gender roles, which includes familial relationships: "If Pixar's films promote loving fatherhood, they may be performing a social good, honoring a social necessity that is deeply rewarding for lots of men, promoting an ethic of responsibility that may literally 'give [men's] lives meaning'" (13-14). Diaval also actively cares for Aurora, showing a paternal interest in her safety and well-being by bringing her a flower to drink from as a baby, rocking her to sleep, playing with her, and watching over her both with and without Maleficent (35:14-37:14, 40:17-43:56). After Maleficent saves Aurora from the curse, Diaval declares "no truer love," yet as the essential co-parent, he deserves to be a more substantial part of such a moment rather than just standing off to the side (1:17:32). Providing the female characters with the opportunity and space to bond rather than obstructing Maleficent or Aurora's attention (often occupying screen time as a raven when depicted with one or the other) establishes his place as a helper instead of as an equal protagonist. This portrayal forms a necessary focus on female characters, but also takes away from the potential emphasis on egalitarian relationships (romantic or not) that benefit male and female depictions. After Maleficent declares that entering the castle to save Aurora does not need to be Diaval's fight, Diaval, who has been there for Aurora and Maleficent (although apparently

unnoticed and appreciated), mumbles loud enough for Maleficent to hear: "Thank you very much; I need you Diaval; I can't do this without you Diaval" (01:10:15, 1:10:24). These moments are meant to be comedic, but they showcase a lapse in Maleficent's ability to appreciate Diaval and allow him to be an equitable part of her life. As Bourdieu argues, "The appearance of new types of family, such as 'composite' families, and the public visibility of new (particularly homosexual) models of sexuality help to break the *doxa* [assumptions of society] and expand the space of what is possible in terms of sexuality" (89, italics in the original). Showcasing not only Diaval's paternal masculinity but also an egalitarian relationship outside of heterosexual romance or marriage still upholds family values but disassembles the assumptions about what and who makes up a family unit.

Diaval's familial role provides a model for parenting and masculine love, which appears to inspire and influence Maleficent's own growing bond with Aurora. He therefore represents "a democratic manhood" experienced through daily gestures such as sharing household and childcare duties, which Kimmel further explicates as:

> an expansive manhood, capable of embracing different groups of men, . . . by race, class, ethnicity, or sexuality . . . . It is an egalitarian manhood, accepting and even embracing the equality of the women in our lives, and preparing our children for . . . greater gender and sexual equality. (*Manhood in America* 297)

Within *Maleficent*, she needs to be the one who steps up as an equal, loving parent and change her treatment toward Diaval to show she has truly made a difference for herself as well as within the realms. In the end, standing by Maleficent's side and flying off with her as raven and fairy displays the potential for a more even partnership (1:26:40, 1:28:08). Also,

giving up her political position to Aurora, while still maintaining her original authority and strength showcases Maleficent's ability to have power without misusing it, an essential act for a friendship or egalitarian, co-parent relationship to exist between her and Diaval. Furthermore, they react together (1:09:22) to the fulfillment of the curse, as if they are both tied to Aurora's fate, and Maleficent even leans on him in her vulnerability (1:09:40); yet she seems less open to accept his emotional and physical help when he appears in human form. Nevertheless, at the end of the film, she reverts back to her open-eared appearance, showcasing her return to her previous respectful (yet still powerful) self—or as the narrator states: "When Maleficent was but a child and her heart was bright" (1:26:24).

Along with his assistance with her emotional development and familial bonding, Diaval's masculine connection to nature, as a raven and through his link with Maleficent, counters previously established masculine-nature connections. As described in the previous section, masculinity often acts as a destructive force for women and nature. Mark Allister elucidates:

> Men have traditionally been identified with the machines, . . . yet men have also been taught to venerate wilderness, which is usually hurt by those machines. This paradox is particularly acute within the powerful social construction of masculinity that the way to prove one's manhood is not to test oneself in nature but to destroy it. (2-3)

Yet, just as supposing all women are close to nature remains problematic, so too is assuming that all men are dangerous. While acknowledging the damaging potential of the patriarchal system, masculine and feminine figures alike can be beneficial allies for nature, contributing different yet equally valuable insights (Plumwood *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* 36).

Just as men can be feminists, men can participate within nature spaces while supporting women's place among the public, culture sphere—liberating themselves as well as women from harmful masculinities. As a helpful male, ecofeminist figure, Diaval models this behavior by assisting Maleficent and Aurora's journey within nature and culture landscapes. Moreover, as he is not defined by the space he owns or controls, unlike his patriarchal counterparts, Diaval does not seem to fit within that human kingdom. Instead, as a raven and Maleficent's assistant, he appears to be at home within the hybrid space of the cottage as well as the Moors, where he travels freely with her. He therefore represents what Connell describes as a "*re-embodiment* for men, a search for different ways of using, feeling, and showing male bodies" (233, italics in original). Although his character remains imperfect, Diaval nevertheless represents a beneficial pattern of masculinity within Disney Princess films. Rather than continuing the oppressive gendered expectations and depictions of patriarchal figures, Diaval represents a nurturing ally role supporting a safer and more complete "happily ever after" for Maleficent, Aurora, and the Moors.

CONCLUSION

Up until the past decade, Disney Princess films proposed a resolution based on heterosexual romance and marriage. With the release of *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, a new trend emerged: protagonists Elsa and Maleficent moved beyond patriarchal danger, isolation, and rivalry with women to focus on familial love and bonding within nature spaces. In *Frozen*, although their father (the King of Arendelle) encourages the sisters' isolation from one another as well as the confinement of Elsa's powers out of concern, this difficulty, as well as the potential danger from Hans and the Duke, leads to Elsa's departure from the castle. Within nature, Elsa feels empowered to explore her magical abilities, and Anna experiences the world beyond her romance with Hans. The sisters' love for one another then leads to the "true love's kiss" ending that saves both characters as well as the kingdom. In *Maleficent*, the Moors, led by Maleficent, must defend themselves against the human realm, ruled by King Henry. This violence, as well as the intimate violation from King Stefan, leads to the problematic masculinization of Maleficent's power and her cursing of Aurora. However, after bonding with Aurora (rather than a continued rivalry) within the nature kingdom of the Moors, Maleficent provides the "true love's kiss" that saves Aurora and creates the opportunity for Maleficent to be reunited with her wings. This emphasis on bonding, along with the help of male allies like Kristoff and Diaval who respect the women's connection to each other and their nature environments, ultimately leads to the utilization of personal and political power in both public and private spheres. Elsa and Anna are able to return from nature isolation to the castle space, this time with Elsa openly using her magical and authority powers to restore their kingdom as well as for individual enjoyment. Maleficent also utilizes this ability—peacefully merging the kingdoms by crowning Aurora as Queen of

both lands. Thus, characters in *Frozen* and *Maleficent* challenge patriarchal norms and structures by desegregating gendered spaces, moving beyond previous Disney depictions of gender roles.

Yet, along with the emphasis on familial, female bonding and the desegregation of gendered spaces, Disney continues the use of binaries and dualistic spheres, male authoritative violence, and does not completely depart from "traditional" or "official" notions of "happily ever after." Disney also remains well-known for its power in teaching children, especially young girls, to conform to society's ideas of gender, which connects to these views of place and the environment. Consequently, as empowering as the recent pattern in gender depictions may be, the message still appears to emphasize adapting to dominant ideologies in the hopes of greater change. This may be a realistic message for the official landscape of Disney, especially since these beliefs are so prevalent in society; however, that means Disney does not depict the full range of diversity audiences represent and the shift in ideologies they deserve.

Due to the influence Disney has on contemporary culture, many audience members and scholars look to the company to make more changes in order to reflect these diverse thoughts and people. Children's films, like *Frozen* and *Maleficent*, mirror society's dominant values that continually change due to consumer capitalism (Booker 184). Therefore, Booker emphasizes the importance of parenting: "Whether these films prepare children to be ideal consumers or whether they prepare them to be resistant readers [of children's films] will be decided on a case-by-case basis, with parents playing a crucial role in the outcome" (187). Numerous studies, as in Karen Wohlwend's "Damsels in Discourse: Girls Consuming and Producing Identity Texts Through Disney Princess Play," analyze the impact of Disney

princess films and the subsequent merchandizing on young children, especially girls. Similar studies and their findings, like "Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation in Disney Feature-Length Animated Films" from Mia Adessa Towbin, et al, are used to give advice to therapists and parents. Feminist parenting books, such as Peggy Orenstein's *Cinderella Ate My Daughter* (New York: Harper Collins, 2011) and Melissa Atkins Wardy's *Redefining Girly: How Parents Can Fight the Stereotyping and Sexualizing of Girlhood, from Birth to Tween* (Chicago: Chicago Review P, 2014), have also raised concerns and produced advice about how to deal with girls' interest in Disney princesses and the associated culture. Due to this popularity, Henry Giroux stresses the importance of evaluating Disney's messages (and the context that shapes them) and starting a public discussion: "The role of the critic of Disney's animated films, however, is not to assign them a particular ideological reading but to analyze the themes outside of the dominant institutional and ideological formations" (*The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence* 90, 96). Through such analysis and encouragement, Disney could serve as a cultural mirror for more than just the dominant ideologies, potentially leading to broader societal changes.

This means looking closer at changes that appear to be progressive, yet in reality probably do not create changes within dominant belief systems. For example, Booker points out the danger in stressing individual destiny over choice within Disney films: "The essentialist individualism of the classic Disney films . . . threatens to marginalize disadvantaged children and to lead them to conclude that, through their own personal shortcomings, they do not deserve to partake of that dream" (177). However, he also notes that Pixar characters, who appear to have inspired the emphasis on growth within Disney characters, still change in stereotypical ways. For example, Elsa's (as well as Maleficent's)

emphasis on family and restoring her political authority still represents a classic happy ending, regardless of the change in familial over romantic love (178). Furthermore, within *Maleficent*, Disney still portrays the need for the vernacular landscape to conform or adapt to the official culture. Thus, despite the empowering quality of the "true love's kiss," which continues the highlighting of familial bonds from *Frozen*, the crowning remains problematic. Disney proved with *Brave* and *Frozen* that the company can develop films with empowering characters, yet with the adaptation of *Sleeping Beauty* to *Maleficent*, Disney still becomes trapped by the act of crowning or establishing an official position. Linda McDowell articulates how power relations create rules establishing social and spatial boundaries, thereby defining inclusion and exclusion within these official and vernacular spheres (4). Although the ultimate goal might be to see both kingdoms as equal, especially with a joint ruler, the Moors were systematically excluded from power and subjected to violence by the human kingdom, reinforcing the realms' separation. Maleficent's removal of her own political title in favor of Aurora and returning to her original position within the Moors appears to be constructive for her character's emotional development, yet makes the audience wonder how much really changed, other than Aurora's new role, between the countries. Therefore, whether or not the vernacular's new need for a political figure to establish a peace with the official culture will be beneficial for the Moors leads to the questioning of the film's ending as a success for all sides.

As a wealthy company that serves as an imperfect cultural mirror for Western society, Disney remains a part of the official landscape. Unable to consider alterative realities of power relations or boundaries, Disney reinforces these dominant ideologies. Relying on dualistic gendered spaces as well as the dichotomous choice of positive female character and

male villain or negative female character and Prince Charming limits the stretching of the characters within these films and ultimately their plots. Therefore, although *Frozen* and *Maleficent* continued to develop many elements from *Brave*, including the blurring of antagonist/protagonist and gendered spatial boundaries, Disney's princess films have not imagined a more radical space where the official truly changes for the vernacular or a reality where these boundaries are no longer necessary.

Nevertheless, I chose to focus on supporting the beneficial steps films like *Frozen* and *Maleficent* made while encouraging growth toward more encompassing examples of "happily ever after," which hopefully become increasingly clear with the development of *Frozen*'s and *Maleficent*'s sequels and subsequent Disney princess films. Although praising Disney for containing feminist elements may seem counterproductive to feminism, such an analysis (while acknowledging problematic areas) does align with the third-wave feminist values that Ednie Kaeh Garrison expresses:

> Rather than monolithically blaming 'them'—those faceless, disembodied people in power—these names [including popular culture] offer ways to think about how we both collude with and attempt to resist the discursive repertoires that recursively limit what counts as feminism in the dominant and dominating American culture. (186-187)[30]

Therefore, studying the helpful and problematic elements within contemporary Disney films can provide areas of praise and dire improvement as audiences demand more realistic, feminist productions. While Audre Lorde was right to question the abilities of working

[30] Leslie Heywood and Jennifer Drake also explicate the connection between feminism and the consumer or corporate culture Disney represents: "Through its celebratory and critical engagement with consumer culture, third wave feminism attempts to navigate the fact that there are few alternatives for the construction of subjectivity outside the production/consumption of global commodification" ("'It's All About the Benjamins': Economic Determinants of Third Wave Feminism in the United States" 120).

within the dominant culture to "*dismantle the master's house*," the inclusion of female writers and directors can assist in the addition of increasingly feminist elements in recent films (99, italics in original). For example, *Brave* has a writer/director Brenda Chapman (who later left the project), one of *Frozen*'s directors is Jennifer Lee, and *Maleficent*'s screenplay writer is Linda Woolverton.

Although these productions are not overtly "feminist", they still have feminist elements. This includes aspects of ecofeminism, which along with third wave notions like intersectionality and inclusiveness remains a valuable part of what makes feminism effective. For instance, Nimah Moore notes: "a number of eco/feminist writers [like Ynestra King and Val Plumwood] have explicitly linked eco/feminism with a third wave of feminism" (130). Empowered by nature and familial bonds with other female characters, Elsa and Maleficent continue a pattern within Disney films that portrays aspects of femininity and masculinity and defines these characters beyond heteronormative relationships by focusing on political and personal achievements. Although Disney still does not portray the reality of ever-blurring boundaries between gendered spheres and realistically complicated "good" versus "evil" characters, Disney's shift in gender depictions led to innovations for its protagonists at an individual and communal level within *Frozen* and *Maleficent*. Improvements still need to be made, but these small changes portrayed new forms of success and empowerment while moving away from some conventional binaries and expectations. Such an increase in feminist elements thus establishes Disney films as an imperfect cultural mirror. And as these Disney films and princess depictions continue, the feminist analysis of these works must also continue to scrutinize and push for developments that could one day truly be labeled as progressive.

WORKS CITED

Adamson, Joni. *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place*. Tucson: Arizona UP, 2001. Print.

Alaimo, Stacy. *Undomesticated Ground: Recasting Nature as Feminist Space*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2000. Print.

Allister, Mark, ed. *Eco-Man*. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 2004. Print.

Andrews, Mark, Brenda Chapman, and Steve Purcell. *Brave*. Perf. Macdonald, Kelly, Billy Connolly, Emma Thompson. Walt Disney Pictures, Pixar Animation Studios, 2012. DVD.

Bancroft, Tony, and Barry Cook. *Mulan*. Perf. Wen, Ming-Na, Eddie Murphy, BD Wong. Walt Disney Feature Animation, Walt Disney Pictures, 1998. DVD.

Baumgardner, Jennifer. *F'em! Goo Goo, Gaga, and Some Thoughts about Balls*. Berkeley: Seal P, 2011. Print.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. New York: Knopf, 2010. Print.

Bell, Elizabeth. "Somatexts at the Disney Shop: Constructing the Pentimentos of Women's Animated Bodies." *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Eds. Bell, Elizabeth, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. 107-24. Print.

Birkeland, Janis. "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice." *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Ed. Gaard, Greta. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1993. 13-59. Print.

Booker, M. Keith. *Disney, Pixar, and the Hidden Messages of Children's Films*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010. Print.

Bottigheimer, Ruth B. "Silenced Women in the Grimms' Tales: The 'Fit' Between Fairy Tales and Society in Their Historical Context." *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*. Ed., Bottigheimer, Ruth B. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania P, 1986.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Masculine Domination*. Trans. Richard Nice. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2001. Print.

Bradford, Claire. "'Where Happily Ever After Happens Every Day': The Medievalisms of Disney Princesses." *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairy-tale and Fantasy Past*. Eds. Pugh, Tison and Sarah Aronstein. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 39-56. Print.

Buck, Chris, and Jennifer Lee. *Frozen*. Perf. Bell, Kristen, Idina Menzel, Jonathan Groff, Josh Gad, Santino Fontana. Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures, 2013. DVD.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge, 1990. Print.

Carlassare, Elizabeth. "Socialist and Cultural Ecofeminist: Allies in Resistance." *Ethics and the Environment* 5.1 (2000): 89-106. Print.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962. Print.

Cashdan, Sheldon. *The Witch Must Die: How Fairy Tales Shape Our Lives*. New York: Basic, 1999. Print.

Chesler, Phyllis. *Woman's Inhumanity to Woman*. New York: Nation Books, 2002. Print.

Clements, Ron, and John Musker. *Aladdin*. Perf. Weinger, Scott, Robin Williams, Linda Larkin. Walt Disney Pictures, 1992. DVD.

---. *The Little Mermaid*. Perf. Benson, Jodi, Samuel E. Wrights, Rene Auberjonois. Walt Disney Pictures, Silver Screen Partners IV, 1989. DVD.

---. *The Princess and the Frog*. Perf. Rose, Anika Noni, Keith David, Oprah Winfrey. Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures, 2009. DVD.

Connell, R.W. *Masculinities: Knowledge, Power and Social Change*. Berkley: California UP, 1995. Print.

Cook, Barbara J, ed. *Women Writing Nature: A Feminist View*. Lanham: Lexington, 2008. Print.

Cottrell, William, et al. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Perf. Caselotti, Adriana, Harry Stockwell, Lucille La Verne. Walt Disney Productions, 1937. DVD.

Daly, Mary. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon, 1978. Print.

Davidoff, Leonore. "Regarding Some 'Old Husbands' Tales': Public and Private in Feminist History." *Feminism, the Public and the Private*. Ed. Landes, Joan B. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 164-94. Print.

Davis, Amy M. *Good Girls and Wicked Witches: Women in Disney's Feature Animation*. Eastleigh: Libbey, 2006. Print.

d'Eaubonne, Françoise. *Le Féminisme ou la mort*. Paris: P. Horay, 1974. Print.

Dentith, Simon. *Parody*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.

"desegregation." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2015. Web. 30 Oct. 2015.

Dinnerstein, Dorothy. "Survival on Earth: The Meaning of Feminism." *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*. Ed. Plant, Judith. Philadelphia: New Society, 1989. 192-200. Print.

Do Rozario, Rebecca-Anne C. "The Princess and the Magic Kingdom: Beyond Nostalgia, The Function of the Disney Princess." *Women's Studies in Communication* 27.1 (2004): 34-59. Print.

Downey, Sharon D. "Feminine Empowerment in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast.*" *Women's Studies in Communication* 19.2 (1996): 185-212. Print.

Duncan, Nancy, ed. *BodySpace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Routledge, 1996. Print.

Duncan, Nancy. "Renegotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private Spaces." *BodySpace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*. Ed. Duncan, Nancy. London: Routledge, 1996. 127-145. Print.

Gaard, Greta, and Patrick D. Murphy, eds. *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory, Interpretation, Pedagogy*. Urbana: Illinois UP, 1998. Print.

Gabriel, Mike, and Eric Goldberg. *Pocahontas*. Perf. Gibson, Mel, Linda Hunt, Christian Bale. Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Feature Animation, 1995. DVD.

Gal, Susan. "A Semiotics of the Public/Private Distinction." *Going Public: Feminism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Private Sphere*. Eds. Scott, Joan W. and Debra Keates. Urbana: Illinois UP, 2004. 261-77. Print.

Gamble, Sarah, ed. "Matriarchy." *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*. London: Routledge, 2001. 271-272 Print.

Garrison, Ednie Kaeh. "Contexts for the Meaning of Third Wave Feminism and Popular Consciousness." *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*. 2nd ed. Eds. Gillis, Stacy and Gillian Howie. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 185-197. Print.

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. Mount Saint Mary's University, 2015. Web. 15 Oct. 2015.

Geronimi, Clyde. *Sleeping Beauty*. Perf. Costa, Mary, Bill Shirley, Eleanor Audley. Walt Disney Productions, 1959. DVD.

Geronimi, Clyde, Wilfred Jackson, and Hamilton Luske. *Cinderella*. Perf. Woods, Ilene, James MacDonald, Eleanor Audley. Walt Disney Productions, 1950. DVD.

Geronimi, Clyde, et al. *Peter Pan*. Perf. Driscoll, Bobby, Kathryn Beaumont, Hans Conried. Walt Disney Productions, 1953. DVD.

Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979. Print.

Gilchrist, Roberta. "Medieval Bodies in the Material World: Gender, Stigma and the Body." *Framing Medieval Bodies*. Eds. Kay, Sarah and Miri Rubin. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994. 43-61. Print.

Gillam, Ken, and Shannon R. Wooden. "Post-Princess Models of Gender: The New Man in Disney/Pixar." *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 36.1 (2008): 2-8. Print.

Giroux, Henry A. "Animating Youth: The Disnification of Children's Culture." *Socialist Review* 24.3 (1995): 23-55. Print.

---. *The Mouse that Roared: Disney and the End of Innocence*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999. Print.

Greno, Nathan, and Byron Howard. *Tangled*. Perf. Moore, Mandy, Zachary Levi, Donna Murphy. Walt Disney Animation Studios, Walt Disney Pictures, 2010. DVD.

Griffin, Susan. *Woman and Nature: The Roaring inside Her*. New York: Harper and Row, 1978. Print.

Hains, Rebecca C. "Family." *The Women's Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-Wave Feminism*. Ed. Heywood, Leslie. Vol. 1. A-Z. Westport: Greenwood P, 2006. 126-29. Print.

Hansson, Heidi. "King Frost and the Ice Queen: Gendered Personifications of the North." *The European English Messenger* 17.1 (2008): 58-69. Print.

Henke, Jill Birnie, Diane Zimmerman Umble, and Nancy J. Smith. "Construction of the Female Self: Feminist Readings of the Disney Heroine." *Women's Studies in Communication* 19.2 (1996): 229-50. Print.

Heywood, Leslie, ed. *The Women's Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-Wave Feminism*. Vol. 1. A-Z. Westport: Greenwood P, 2006. Print.

Heywood, Leslie, and Jennifer Drake. "'It's All About the Benjamins': Economic Determinants of Third Wave Feminism in the United States." *Third Wave Feminism:*

A Critical Exploration. 2nd ed. Eds. Gillis, Stacy and Gillian Howie. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 114-24. Print.

hooks, bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End P, 1984. Print.

Howie, Gillian. "Patriarchy." *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*. 2nd ed. Eds. Gillis, Stacy and Gillian Howie. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 239-40. Print.

Johnson, Matthew. *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Kimmel, Michael. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2012. Print.

---. "Masculinity." *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. 2nd ed. Vol. 5. Ed. Darity Jr., William A. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2008. 1-5. Print.

King, C. Richard, Carmen R. Lugo-Lugo, and Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo. *Animating Difference: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Contemporary Films for Children*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010. Print.

Kirk, Gwyn, and Margo Okazawa-Rey. *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010. Print.

Kolodny, Annette. *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1975. Print.

"landscape." *Oxforddictionaries.com*. Oxford University Press, 2016. Web. 15 Nov. 2015.

Lawrence, Bruce B., and Aisha Karim, eds. *On Violence: A Reader*. Durham: Duke UP, 2007. Print.

Lieberman, Marcia R. "'Some Day My Prince Will Come': Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale." *College English* 34.3 (1972): 383-95. Print.

Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." *This Bridge Called My Back: Writing by Radical Women of Color*. 1979. Eds. Anzaldúa, Gloria, and Cherríe Moraga. 2nd ed. New York: Kitchen Table - Women of Color P, 1983. 98-101. Print.

Maass, Vera Sonja. *The Cinderella Test: Would You Really Want the Shoe to Fit?* Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2009. Print.

MacKinnon, Catharine. “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory.” *On Violence: A Reader*. Eds. Lawrence, Bruce B., and Aisha Karim. Durham: Duke UP, 2007. 286-91. Print.

McDowell, Linda. *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1999. Print.

"mal." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2015. Web. 15 April 2015.

Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1980. Print.

Mollet, Tracey. "‘With a Smile and a Song ...’: Walt Disney and the Birth of the American Fairytale.” *Marvels and Tales* 27.1 (2013): 109-25. Print.

Moore, Niamh. “Imagining Feminist Futures: The Third Wave, Postfeminism and Eco/feminism.” *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*. 2nd ed. Eds. Gillis, Stacy and Gillian Howie. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. 125-41. Print.

Murphy, Patrick D. “The Whole Wide World Was Scrubbed Clean: The Androcentric Animation of Denatured Disney.” *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Eds. Bell, Elizabeth, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. 125-136. Print.

Murray, Susan. “Women and Castles in Geoffrey of Monmouth and Malory.” *Arthuriana* 13.1 (2003): 17-41. Print.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2011. Print.

Orenstein, Peggy. *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*. New York: Harper Collins, 2011. Print.

Ortner, Sherry B. “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” *Feminism, the Public and the Private*. Ed. Landes, Joan B. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 21-44. Print.

Piepmeier, Alison. “Rape.” *The Women’s Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-Wave Feminism*. Ed. Heywood, Leslie. Vol. 1. A-Z. Westport: Greenwood P, 2006. 270-272. Print.

Plumwood, Val. *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

---. *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature.* London: Routledge, 1993. Print.

Rich, Adrienne. “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5.4 (1980): 631-60. Print.

Rohrich, Lutz. "Introduction." *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*. Ed. Bottigheimer, Ruth B. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 1986. 1-12. Print.

Rooney, Ellen. "A Semiprivate Room." *Going Public: Feminism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Private Sphere*. Eds. Scott, Joan W. and Debra Keates. Urbana: Illinois UP, 2004. 333-58. Print.

Siegel, Deborah. "Feminism, First, Second, Third Waves." *The Women's Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-Wave Feminism*. Ed. Heywood, Leslie. Vol. 1. A-Z. Westport: Greenwood P, 2006. 134-41. Print.

Spain, Daphne. *Gendered Spaces*. Chapel Hill: North Carolina UP, 1992. Print.

Stone, Kay F. "Feminist Approaches to Interpretation." *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*. Ed. Bottigheimer, Ruth B. Philadelphia: Pennsylvania UP, 1986. 229-36. Print.

---. "Things Walt Disney Never Told Us." *The Journal of American Folklore* 88.347 (1975): 42-50. Print.

Stromberg, Robert. *Maleficent*. Perf. Jolie, Angelina, Elle Fanning, Sharlto Copley, Sam Riley. Walt Disney Pictures, Roth Films, 2014. DVD.

Sturtevant, Paul. "You Don't Learn it Deliberately, But You Know It From What You've Seen: British Understandings of the Medieval Past Gleaned from Disney's Fairy Tales." *The Disney Middle Ages: A Fairy-tale and Fantasy Past*. Eds. Pugh, Tison, and Susan Aronstein. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 77-96. Print.

Tanenbaum, Leora. *Catfight: Women and Competition*. New York: Seven Stories P, 2002. Print.

Tatar, Maria, ed. *The Annotated Hans Christian Anderson*. Trans. Maria Tatar and Julie K. Allen. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008. Print.

Tètreault, Mary Ann. "Frontier Politics: Sex, Gender, and the Deconstruction of the Public Sphere." *Women's Rights: The Public/Private Dichotomy*. Ed. Motiejunaite, Jurate. New York: International Debate Education Association. 2005. 29-50. Print.

The Representation Project. The Representation Project, 2015. Web. 15 Oct. 2015.

Tongs, Rosemarie. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. 4th ed. Boulder: Westview P, 2014. Print.

Towbin, Mia Adessa, et al. "Images of Gender, Race, Age, and Sexual Orientation in Disney Feature-Length Animated Films." *Journal of Feminist Family Therapy* 15.4 (2003): 19-44. Print.

Trousdale, Gary, and Kirk Wise. *Beauty and the Beast*. Perf. O'Hara, Paige, Robby Benson, Jesse Corti. Walt Disney Pictures, Silver Screen Partners IV, 1991. DVD.

Walker, Rebecca. "Becoming the Third Wave." *Ms*. 2.4 (1992): 39-41. Print.

Wardy, Melissa Atkins. *Redefining Girly: How Parents Can Fight the Stereotyping and Sexualizing of Girlhood, from Birth to Tween*. Chicago: Chicago Review P, 2014. Print.

Wittig, Monique. *The Straight Mind: And Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon P, 1992. Print.

Wohlwend, Karen E. "Damsels in Discourse: Girls Consuming and Producing Identity Texts Through Disney Princess Play." *Reading Research Quarterly* 44.1 (2009): 57-83. Print.

Wood, Naomi. "(Em)bracing Icy Mothers: Ideology, Identity, and Environment in Children's Fantasy." *Wild Things: Children's Culture and Ecocriticism*. Eds. Dobrin, Sidney I. and Kenneth B. Kidd. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 2004. 198-214. Print.

Wooden, Shannon R., and Gillam, Ken. *Pixar's Boy Stories: Masculinity in a Postmodern Age*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014. Print.

Zipes, Jack. "Breaking the Disney Spell." *From Mouse to Mermaid: The Politics of Film, Gender, and Culture*. Eds. Bell, Elizabeth, Lynda Haas, and Laura Sells. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. 21-42. Print.